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THIS ISSUE: In "This Murder Comes To You Live," is Doctor Rune, The MAZE Agency's old enemy, trying to kill the host of "America's Video Lineup"? Or is he being framed? It's a crime that Jennifer and Gabe go on national television to solve!

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INNOVATION™

# Innovation Plans Three New Anne Rice Adaptations

Innovation Publishing, in response to the success of its adaptation of Anne Rice's best-selling novel, ***THE VAMPIRE LESTAT,*** has just inked deals to adapt three other titles of Rice's.

"Anne Rice, her publisher, and her agent have all been immensely pleased with the amount of care we have taken in adapting ***THE VAMPIRE LESTAT,***" said David Campiti, Innovation Publisher and Editor-In-Chief. "Instead of shopping these other titles around to other comic publishers (and possibly finding a better monetary offer), they felt safest licensing these projects to a publisher whose level of work they already trusted."

In cooperation with Alfred A. Knopf, Publishers, Innovation will now adapt the other two existing novels in Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles series: ***INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE*** and ***THE QUEEN OF THE DAMNED.*** Told from the perspective of Louis, a vampire created by the primary character in ***THE VAMPIRE LESTAT, INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE*** tells the story of Lestat, Louis, and the vampire child Claudia's adventures in 19th Century New Orleans, and the events leading up to Lestat's self-imposed 60 year sleep. (Which he awakes from at the beginning of ***THE VAMPIRE LESTAT.***)

***THE QUEEN OF THE DAMNED*** picks up immediately at the finish of ***THE VAMPIRE LESTAT,*** as Akasha, an ancient Egyptian Queen and progenitor of the entire vampire race, is awakened by Lestat's rock music after a 4,000 year sleep. She travels the world destroying vampires everywhere, prior to pursuing her real goal: presenting herself as a "god" to the human race and ruling the world. Lestat, Marius, Louis, Armand and the other vampires that remain must find a way to stop Akasha, before they themselves perish and the human race is subjected to a tyrannical ruler who can never die.

Each of these two series will be done in the same format as ***THE VAMPIRE LESTAT*** series: 32-page, full-color, fully-painted, comic-sized issues, with cardstock covers and interiors printed on higher quality slick paper. Each series will consist of 12 bi-monthly issues.

Tentative plans call for ***INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE #1*** to be released in late Spring 1991. ***THE QUEEN OF THE DAMNED #1*** will be released six to eight weeks after the final issue of ***THE VAMPIRE LESTAT,*** in the Summer of 1991, since the ***THE QUEEN OF THE DAMNED*** storyline picks up immediately at the conclusion of ***THE VAMPIRE LESTAT.*** Although art teams have yet to be chosen for these two projects, adapting and scripting is already underway. Cynthy J. Wood (***LEGENDS OF THE STARGRAZERS***) will be handling the adaptation of ***INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE,*** and James Schlosser will be adapting ***THE QUEEN OF THE DAMNED.***

In cooperation with Janklow & Nesbitt Associates, Anne Rice's agents, the other upcoming Rice adaptation is ***THE MASTER OF RAMPLING GATE,*** a previously "lost" work of Rice's which was originally published in *Redbook* in 1984, before The Vampire Chronicles had developed the fantastic following they have today.

***THE MASTER OF RAMPLING GATE*** is a horror/romance tale situated in late 19th Century England. The story revolves around a brother and sister -- the last two descendants of an aristocratic English family. Their father, on his deathbed, exhorts them to destroy the family's ancestral mansion that has been uninhabited for years. Out of curiosity, they visit the house first, only to discover the horrible secret of the old castle -- an ancient vampire who has held sway over the Rampling family for centuries.

***THE MASTER OF RAMPLING GATE,*** tentatively scheduled for release in Spring 1991, will be a fully-painted, 72-page prestige-format trade paperback. Although the art team for this book is not yet complete, James Schlosser (***THE QUEEN OF THE DAMNED***) will be doing the adaptation, and the book will feature a cover painting by British horror artist John Bolton.

"The phenomenal success of our adaptation of ***THE VAMPIRE LESTAT*** has been a pleasant surprise for everyone -- including us," said Innovation's Director Of Marketing & Licensing, Jim Elliott. "Each of the Vampire Chronicles novels was a million seller or better, so they've got a huge built-in audience to start with. With the fascinating visual elements that Anne Rice works into these stories, they should do well even with readers who haven't yet become fans of Anne Rice's stuff.

"The only negative comments we've ever heard on ***THE VAMPIRE LESTAT*** series have been fan disappointment at our not adapting the other books in the series. Now that we're adapting these as well, Anne Rice fans should be pleased."

***-- Jim Elliott***
***December, 1990***

THE MAZE AGENCY®
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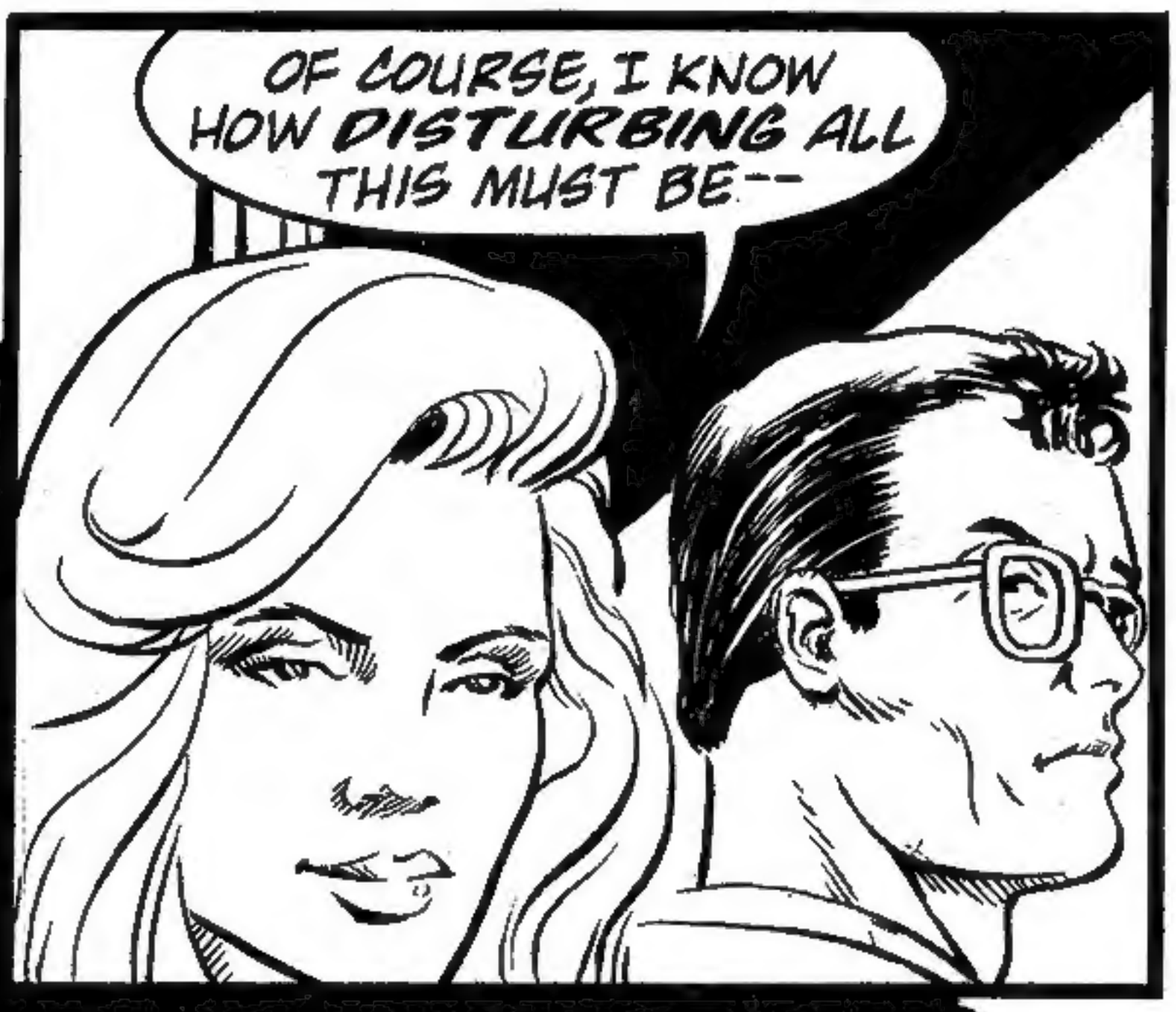
Published by the INNOVATIVE CORPORATION, 3622 Jacob Street, Wheeling, WV 26003, (304) 232-7701. David Campiti, President & Publisher. Diana Light, Operations Manager. George Broderick, Art Director. Jim Elliott, Licensing & Marketing Director. Story, text & art © 1990 Mike W. Barr. Other editorial material © 1990 Innovative Corp. The MAZE Agency, all prominent characters in this issue, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are ® 1990 Mike W. Barr. Innovation logo TM 1990 Innovative Corp. All rights reserved. Color separations by Susan Glod. For advertising rates or licensing information, call (304) 232-7703. Fax #304-232-4010. Subscriptions $3.00 per issue. ***It's an Innovation Publication!***



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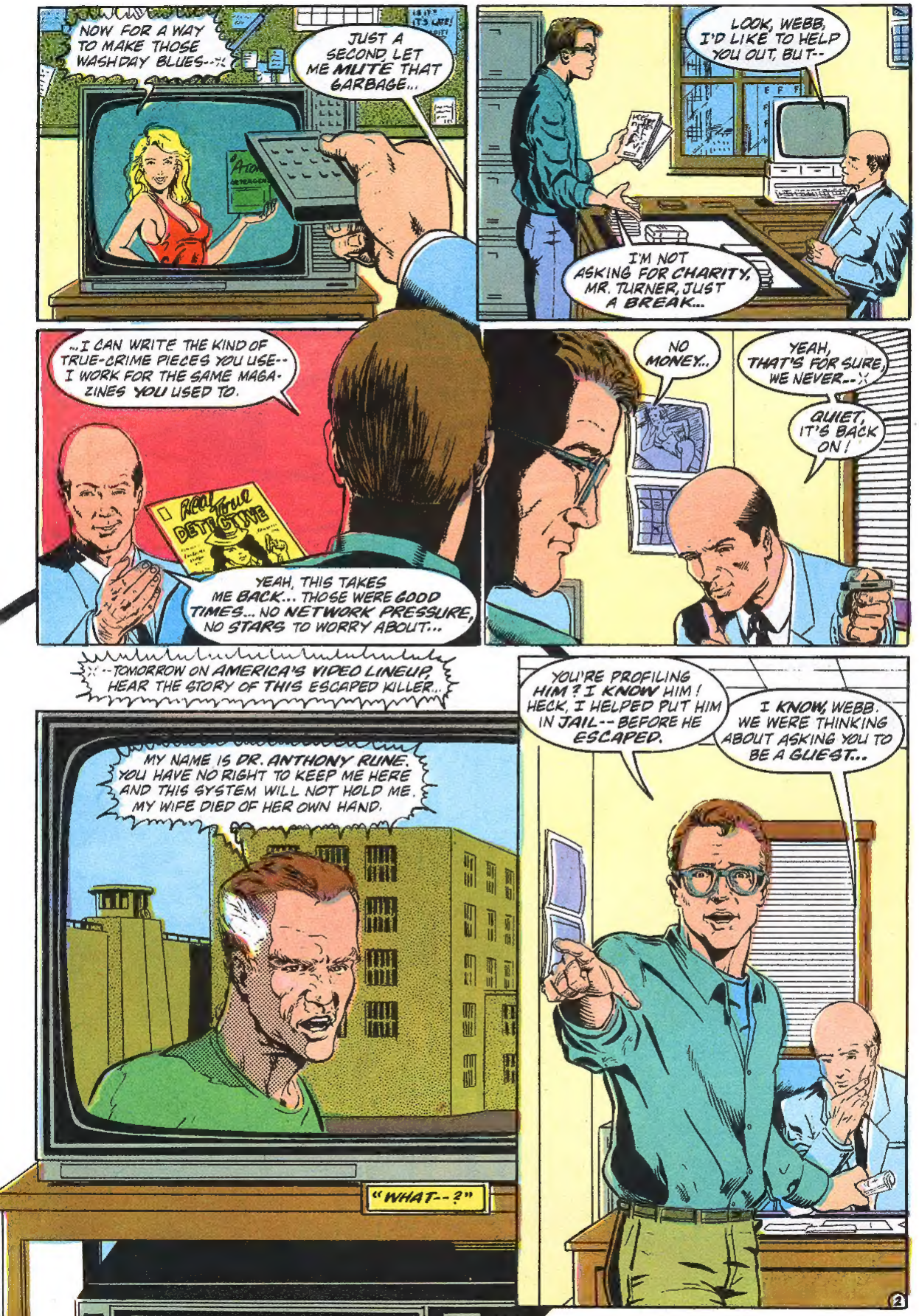
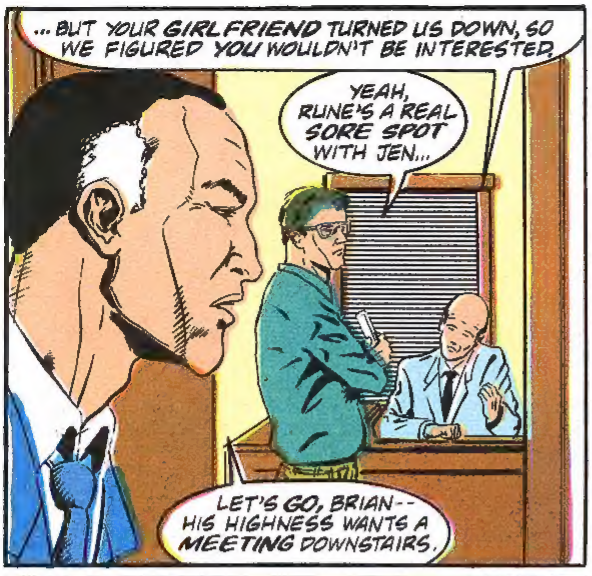
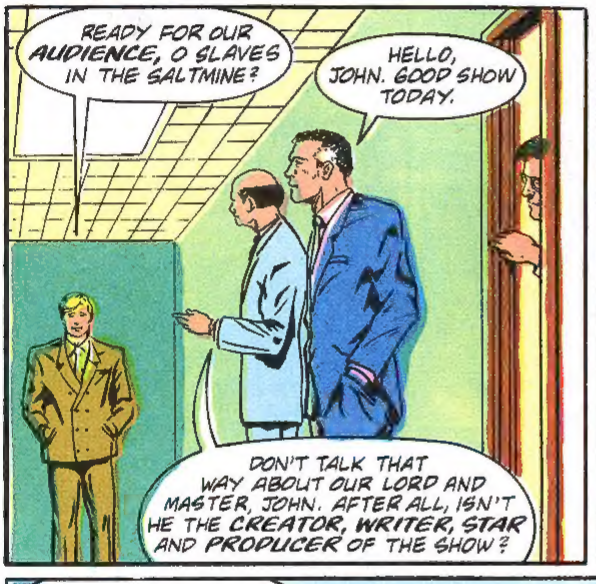
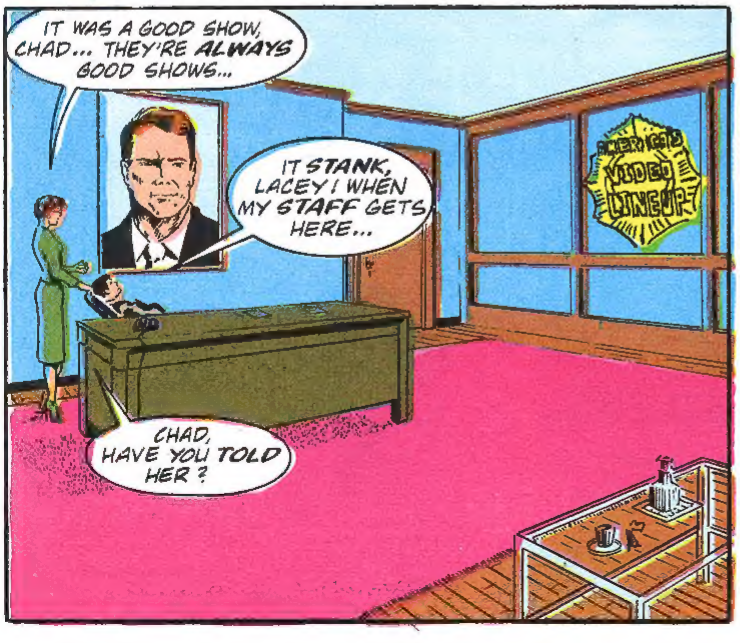

NOW FOR A WAY TO MAKE THOSE WASHDAY BLUES--
JUST A SECOND LET ME MUTE THAT GARBAGE...
LOOK, WEBB, I'D LIKE TO HELP YOU OUT, BUT--
I'M NOT ASKING FOR CHARITY, MR. TURNER, JUST A BREAK...
--I CAN WRITE THE KIND OF TRUE-CRIME PIECES YOU USE-- I WORK FOR THE SAME MAGAZINES YOU USED TO.
REAL TRUE DETECTIVE
YEAH, THIS TAKES ME BACK... THOSE WERE GOOD TIMES... NO NETWORK PRESSURE, NO STARS TO WORRY ABOUT...
NO MONEY..
YEAH, THAT'S FOR SURE, WE NEVER--
QUIET, IT'S BACK ON!
--TOMORROW ON AMERICA'S VIDEO LINEUP, HEAR THE STORY OF THIS ESCAPED KILLER..
MY NAME IS DR. ANTHONY RUNE. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO KEEP ME HERE AND THIS SYSTEM WILL NOT HOLD ME. MY WIFE DIED OF HER OWN HAND.
"WHAT--?"
YOU'RE PROFILING HIM? I KNOW HIM! HECK, I HELPED PUT HIM IN JAIL-- BEFORE HE ESCAPED.
I KNOW, WEBB. WE WERE THINKING ABOUT ASKING YOU TO BE A GUEST...
2


... BUT YOUR GIRLFRIEND TURNED US DOWN, SO WE FIGURED YOU WOULDN'T BE INTERESTED.
YEAH, RUNE'S A REAL SORE SPOT WITH JEN...
LET'S GO, BRIAN-- HIS HIGHNESS WANTS A MEETING DOWNSTAIRS.

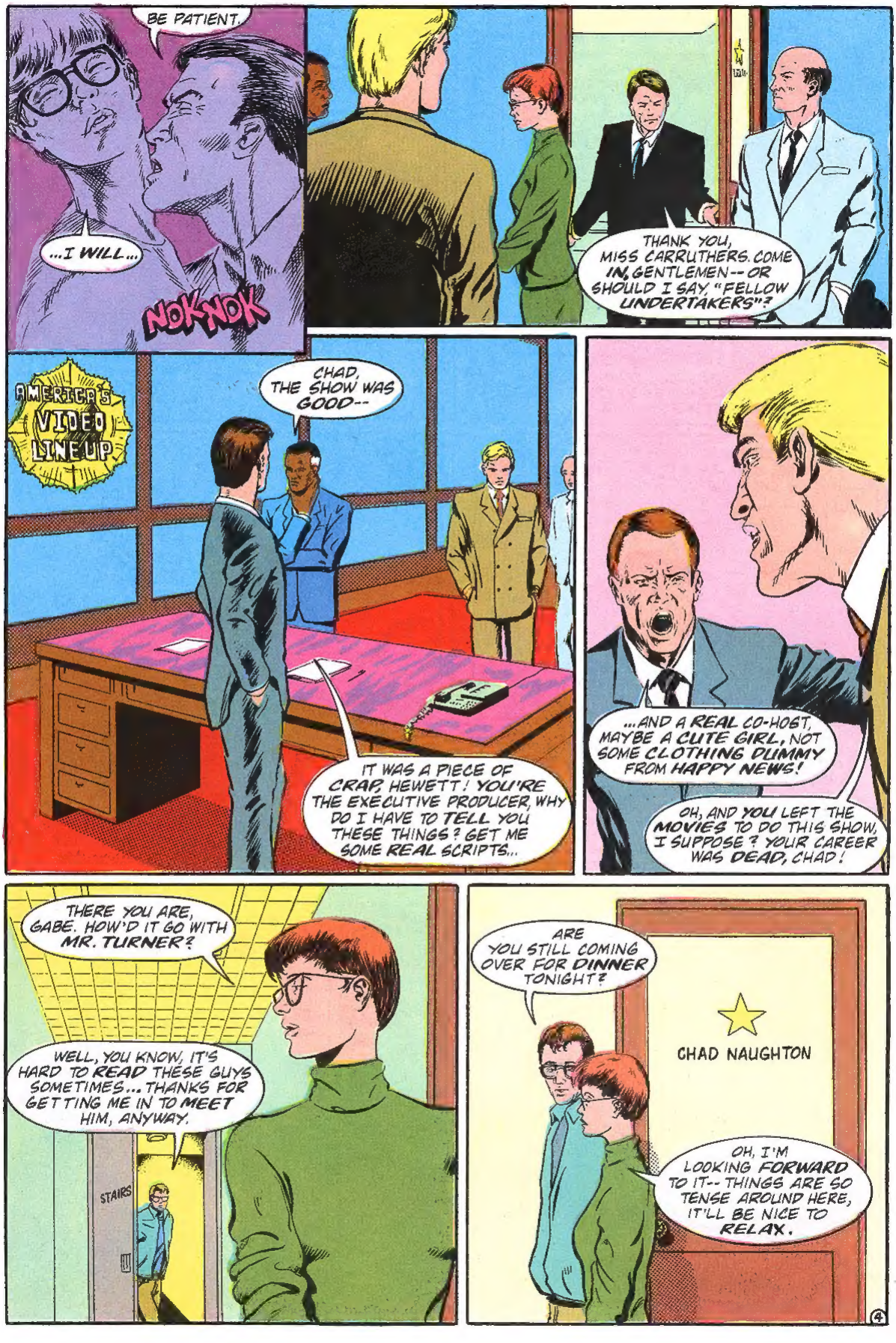
RIGHT WITH YOU, HEWETT...
MR. PARKE, I'M GABE WEBB, A TRUE-CRIME WRITER.
BRIAN INTERVIEWS ALL THE WRITERS, WEBB.


READY FOR OUR AUDIENCE, O SLAVES IN THE SALTMINE?
HELLO, JOHN. GOOD SHOW TODAY.
DON'T TALK THAT WAY ABOUT OUR LORD AND MASTER, JOHN. AFTER ALL, ISN'T HE THE CREATOR, WRITER, STAR AND PRODUCER OF THE SHOW?

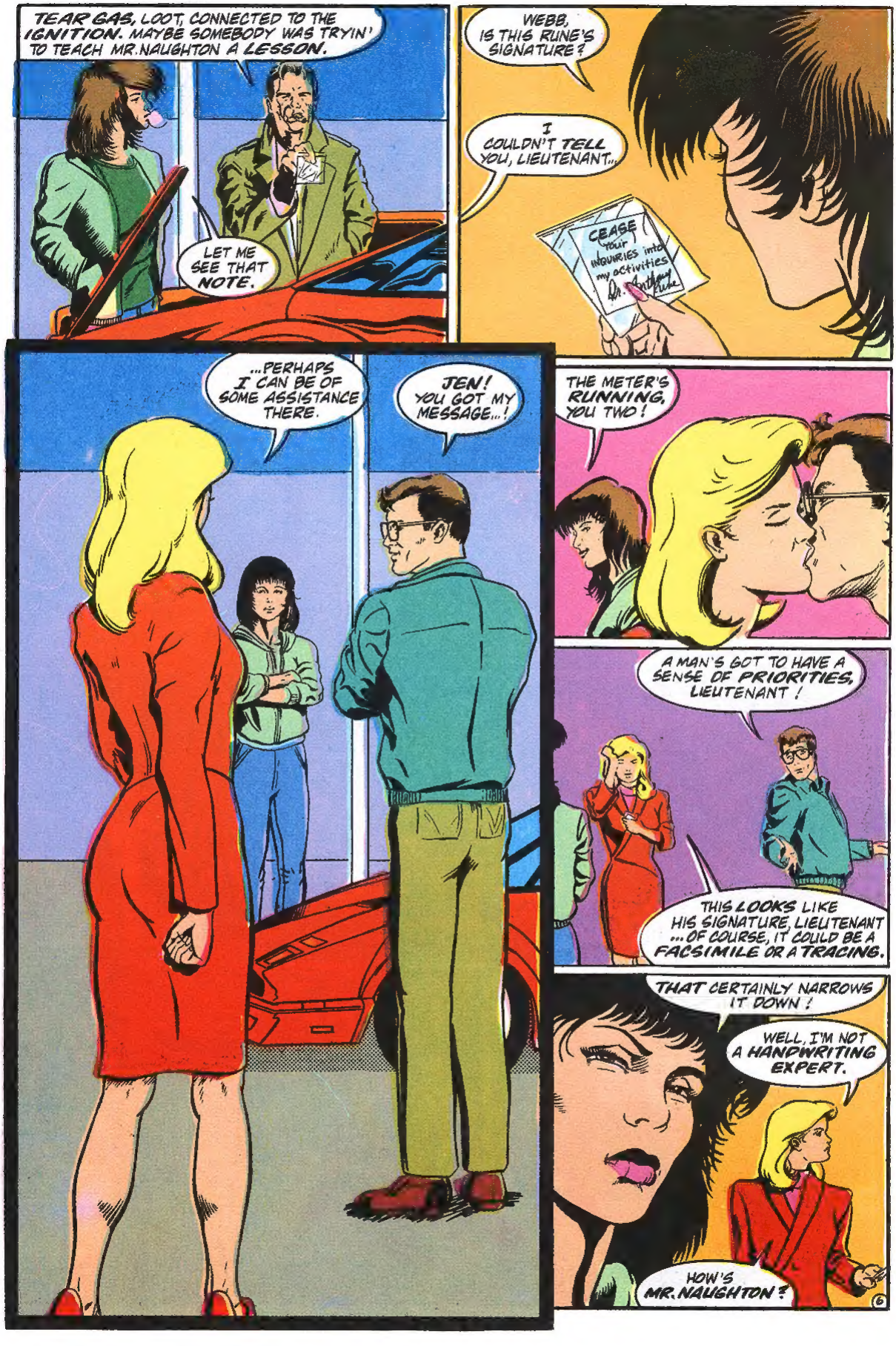
HA HA HA
HA HA HA

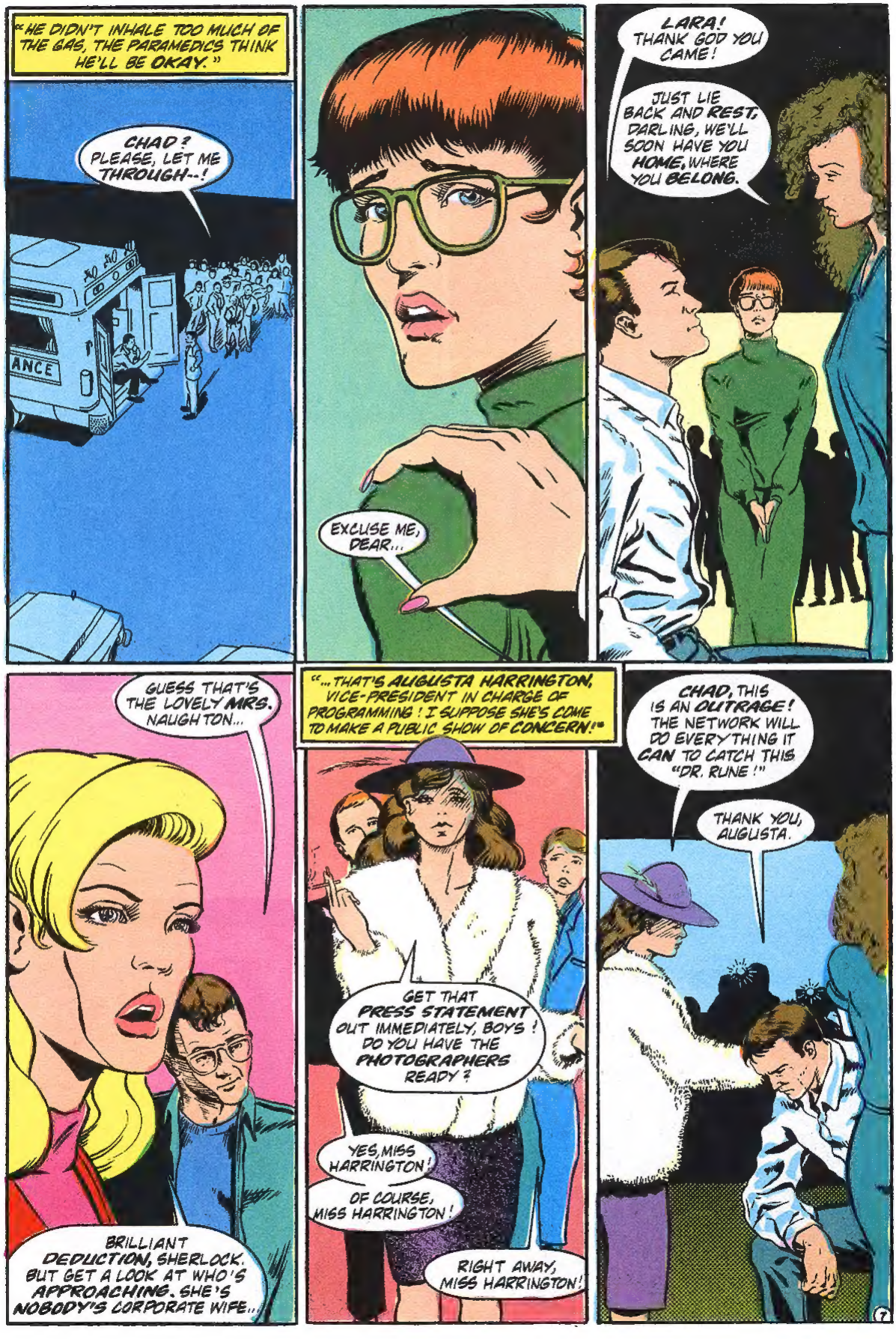

IT WAS A GOOD SHOW, CHAD... THEY'RE ALWAYS GOOD SHOWS...
IT STANK, LACEY! WHEN MY STAFF GETS HERE...
CHAD, HAVE YOU TOLD HER?

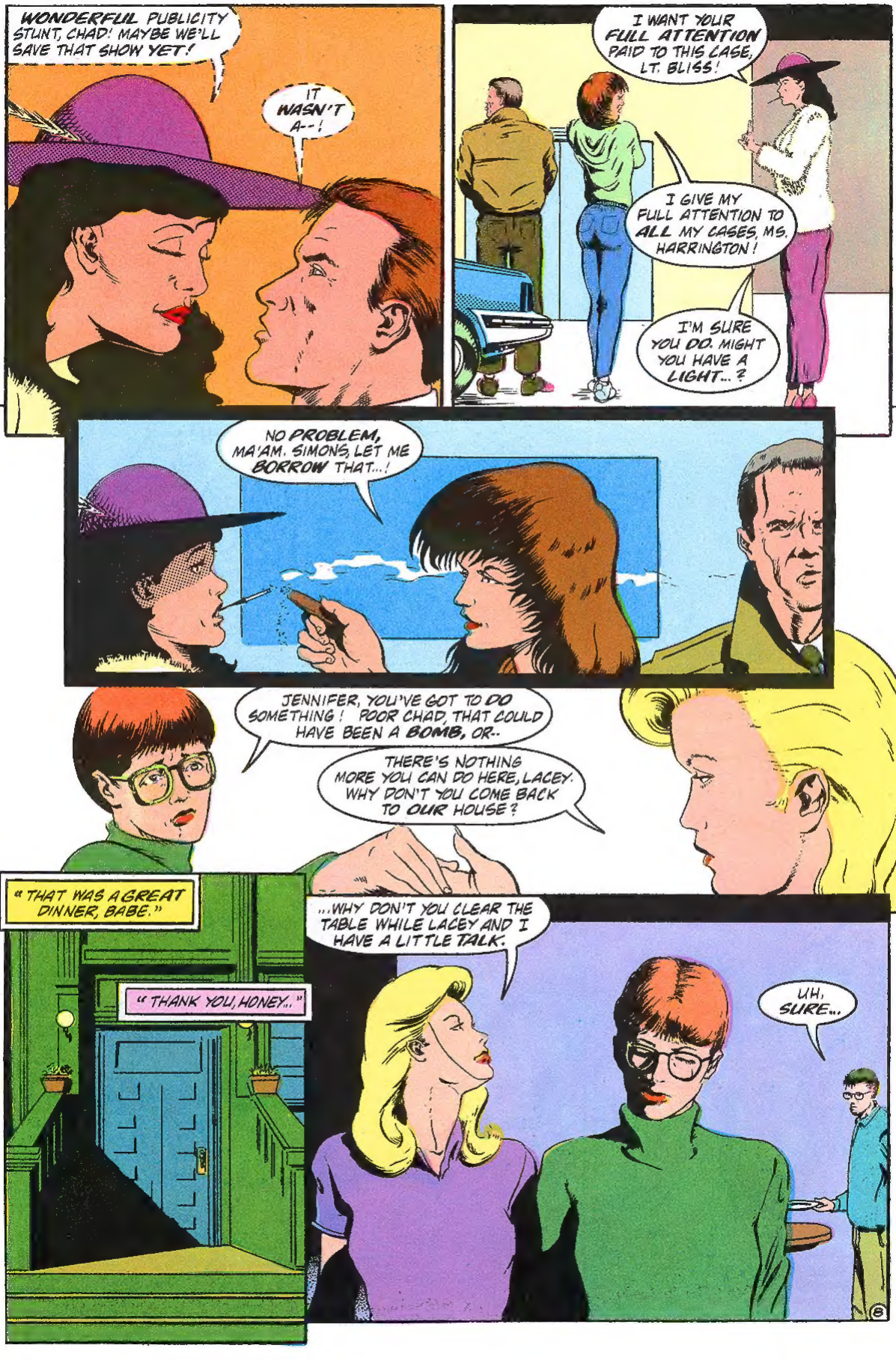
NOT YET, HONEY, BUT I WILL. IT'S NOT EASY FOR ME EITHER, YOU KNOW-- ALL THIS SNEAKING AROUND...
I KNOW, BUT--

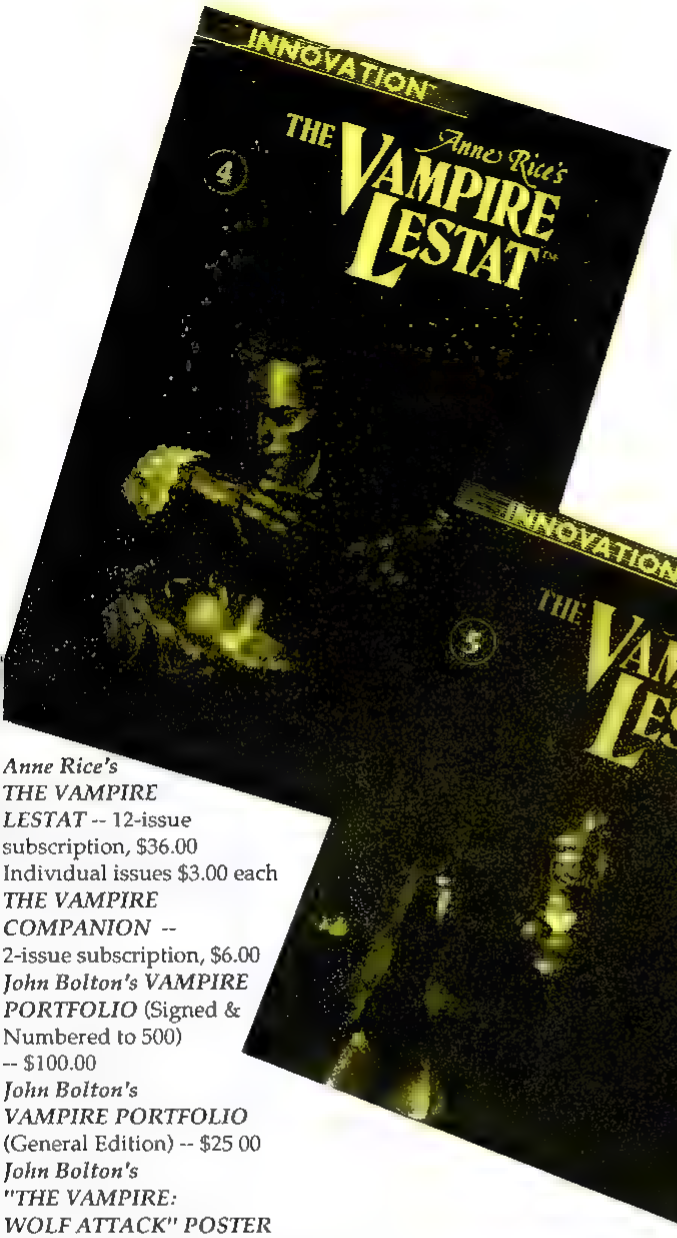

BE PATIENT.
...I WILL...
NOK NOK
THANK YOU, MISS CARRUTHERS. COME IN, GENTLEMEN--OR SHOULD I SAY, "FELLOW UNDERTAKERS"?
AMERICA'S VIDEO LINEUP
CHAD, THE SHOW WAS GOOD--
IT WAS A PIECE OF CRAP, HEWETT! YOU'RE THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, WHY DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU THESE THINGS? GET ME SOME REAL SCRIPTS...
...AND A REAL CO-HOST, MAYBE A CUTE GIRL, NOT SOME CLOTHING DUMMY FROM HAPPY NEWS!
OH, AND YOU LEFT THE MOVIES TO DO THIS SHOW, I SUPPOSE? YOUR CAREER WAS DEAD, CHAD!
THERE YOU ARE, GABE. HOW'D IT GO WITH MR. TURNER?
WELL, YOU KNOW, IT'S HARD TO READ THESE GUYS SOMETIMES... THANKS FOR GETTING ME IN TO MEET HIM, ANYWAY.
STAIRS
ARE YOU STILL COMING OVER FOR DINNER TONIGHT?
CHAD NAUGHTON
OH, I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT-- THINGS ARE SO TENSE AROUND HERE, IT'LL BE NICE TO RELAX.
4

TRAFFIC'LL BE MURDER, BUT WE MIGHT AS WELL HEAD OUT.
LET ME GET MY PURSE, AND I'LL BE READY.
HEADING TO THE GARAGE, MISS CARRUTHERS?
YES, MR. NAUGHTON...
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO INTRODUCE YOU? MAYBE HE'LL--
NO THANKS, LACE-- THERE'S NO CHANCE I'LL EVER GET ON THIS SHOW!
I THINK THERE'S A TAXI STAND JUST OUTSIDE HERE...
GOOD NIGHT, MR. NAUGHTON.
SEE YOU TOMORROW, MISS CARRUTHERS.
FA-WOOOSH
CHAD!
"HE'S GONNA BE OKAY, LIEUTENANT BLISS-- A LITTLE OXYGEN FIXED HIM RIGHT UP!"
"WHAT WAS IN THAT THING, ANYWAY, SIMONS?"


TEAR GAS, LOOT, CONNECTED TO THE IGNITION. MAYBE SOMEBODY WAS TRYIN' TO TEACH MR. NAUGHTON A LESSON.
LET ME SEE THAT NOTE.
WEBB, IS THIS RUNE'S SIGNATURE?
I COULDN'T TELL YOU, LIEUTENANT...
CEASE your inquiries into my activities
...PERHAPS I CAN BE OF SOME ASSISTANCE THERE.
JEN! YOU GOT MY MESSAGE...!
THE METER'S RUNNING, YOU TWO!
A MAN'S GOT TO HAVE A SENSE OF PRIORITIES, LIEUTENANT!
THIS LOOKS LIKE HIS SIGNATURE, LIEUTENANT ...OF COURSE, IT COULD BE A FACSIMILE OR A TRACING.
THAT CERTAINLY NARROWS IT DOWN!
WELL, I'M NOT A HANDWRITING EXPERT.
HOW'S MR. NAUGHTON?
6


"HE DIDN'T INHALE TOO MUCH OF THE GAS, THE PARAMEDICS THINK HE'LL BE OKAY."
CHAD? PLEASE, LET ME THROUGH--!
EXCUSE ME, DEAR...
LARA! THANK GOD YOU CAME!
JUST LIE BACK AND REST, DARLING, WE'LL SOON HAVE YOU HOME, WHERE YOU BELONG.
GUESS THAT'S THE LOVELY MRS. NAUGHTON...
BRILLIANT DEDUCTION, SHERLOCK. BUT GET A LOOK AT WHO'S APPROACHING. SHE'S NOBODY'S CORPORATE WIFE...
"...THAT'S AUGUSTA HARRINGTON, VICE-PRESIDENT IN CHARGE OF PROGRAMMING! I SUPPOSE SHE'S COME TO MAKE A PUBLIC SHOW OF CONCERN!"
GET THAT PRESS STATEMENT OUT IMMEDIATELY, BOYS! DO YOU HAVE THE PHOTOGRAPHERS READY?
YES, MISS HARRINGTON!
OF COURSE, MISS HARRINGTON!
RIGHT AWAY, MISS HARRINGTON!
CHAD, THIS IS AN OUTRAGE! THE NETWORK WILL DO EVERYTHING IT CAN TO CATCH THIS "DR. RUNE!"
THANK YOU, AUGUSTA.


WONDERFUL PUBLICITY STUNT, CHAD! MAYBE WE'LL SAVE THAT SHOW YET!
IT WASN'T A--!
I WANT YOUR FULL ATTENTION PAID TO THIS CASE, LT. BLISS!
I GIVE MY FULL ATTENTION TO ALL MY CASES, MS. HARRINGTON!
I'M SURE YOU DO. MIGHT YOU HAVE A LIGHT...?
NO PROBLEM, MA'AM. SIMONS, LET ME BORROW THAT...!
JENNIFER, YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING! POOR CHAD, THAT COULD HAVE BEEN A BOMB, OR..
THERE'S NOTHING MORE YOU CAN DO HERE, LACEY. WHY DON'T YOU COME BACK TO OUR HOUSE?
"THAT WAS A GREAT DINNER, BABE."
"THANK YOU, HONEY..."
...WHY DON'T YOU CLEAR THE TABLE WHILE LACEY AND I HAVE A LITTLE TALK.
UH, SURE...

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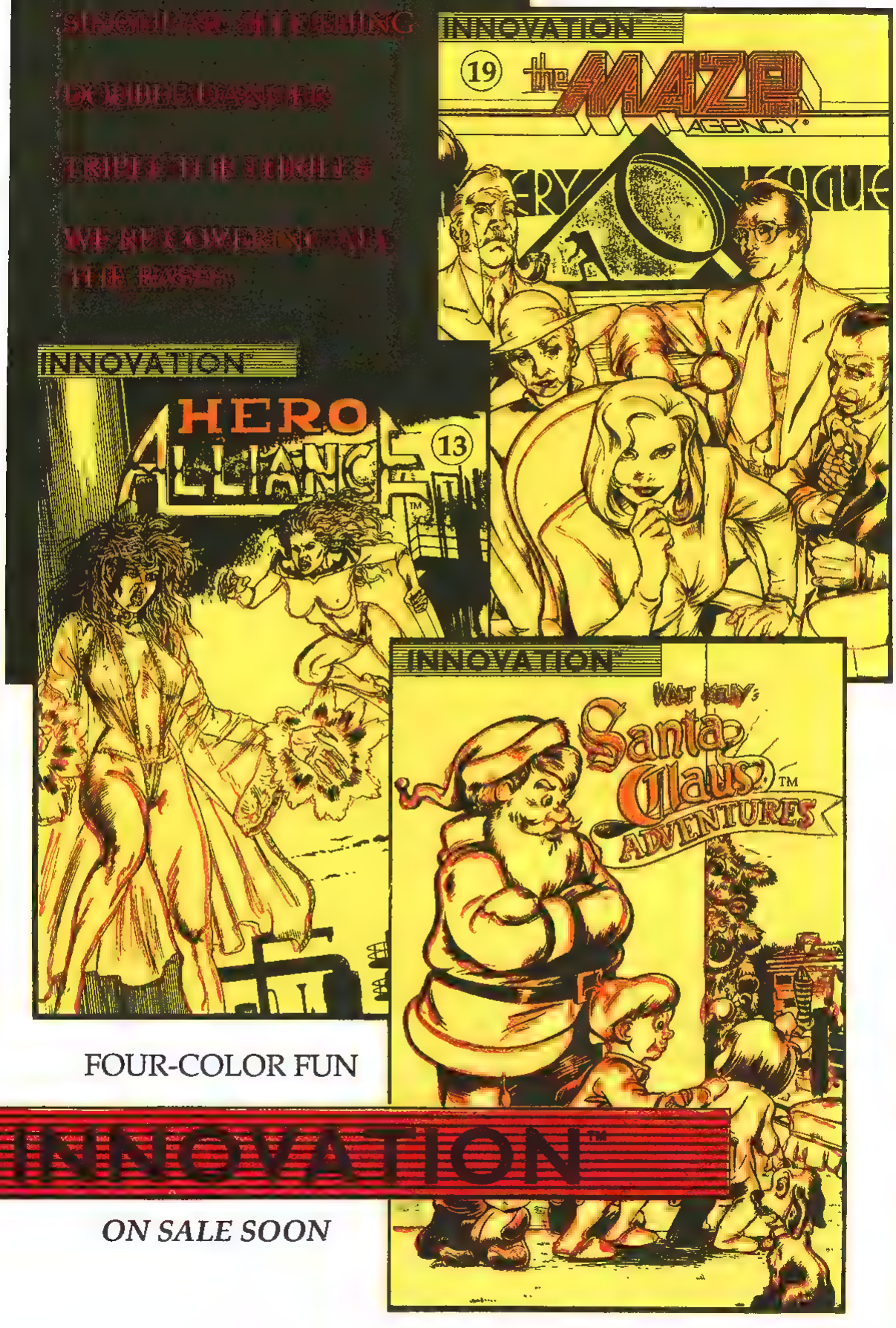


FOUR-COLOR FUN

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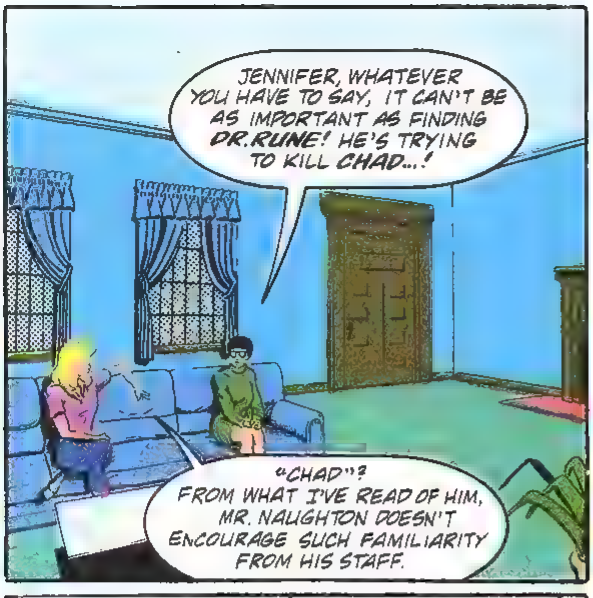
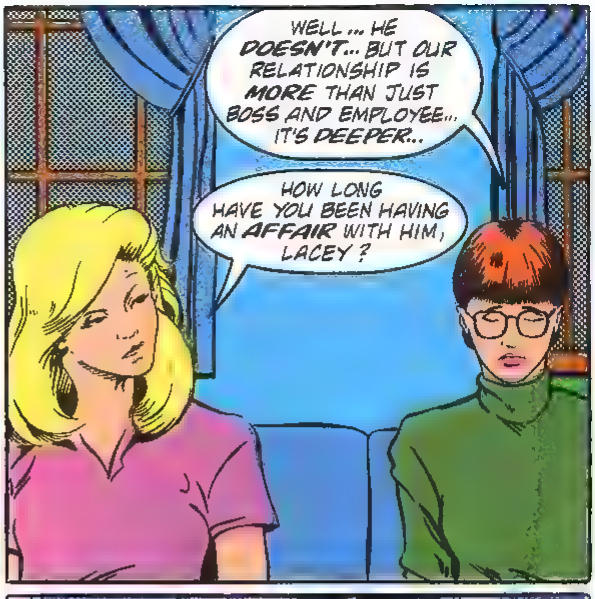
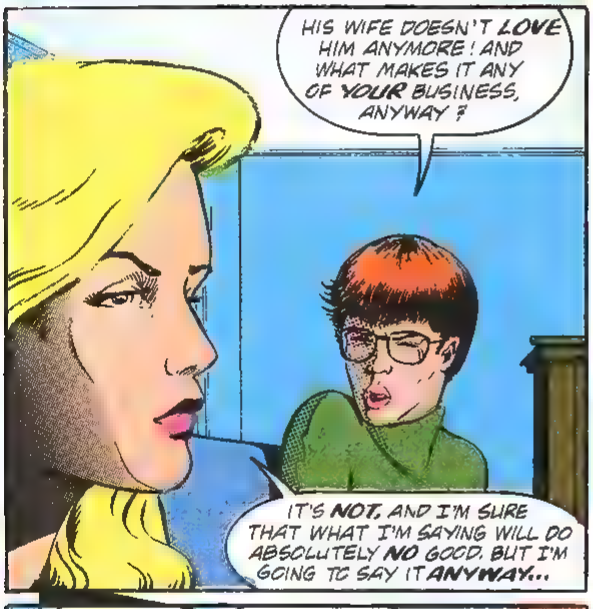
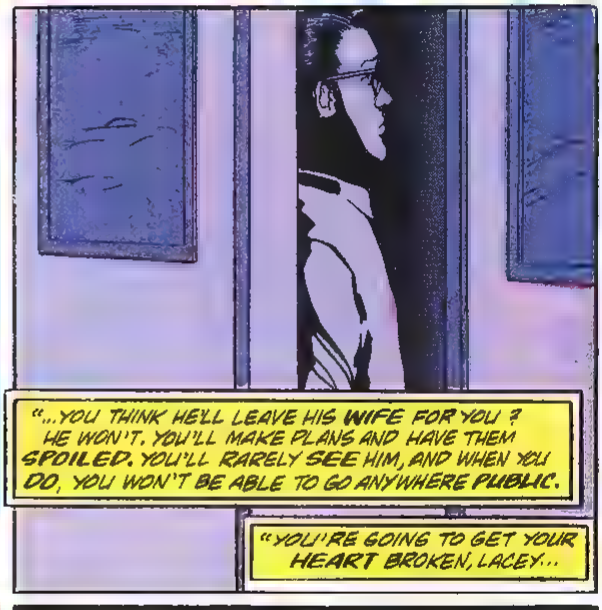
*ON SALE SOON*


JENNIFER, WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO SAY, IT CAN'T BE AS IMPORTANT AS FINDING DR. RUNE! HE'S TRYING TO KILL CHAD...!
"CHAD"? FROM WHAT I'VE READ OF HIM, MR. NAUGHTON DOESN'T ENCOURAGE SUCH FAMILIARITY FROM HIS STAFF.


WELL... HE DOESN'T... BUT OUR RELATIONSHIP IS MORE THAN JUST BOSS AND EMPLOYEE... IT'S DEEPER...
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH HIM, LACEY?

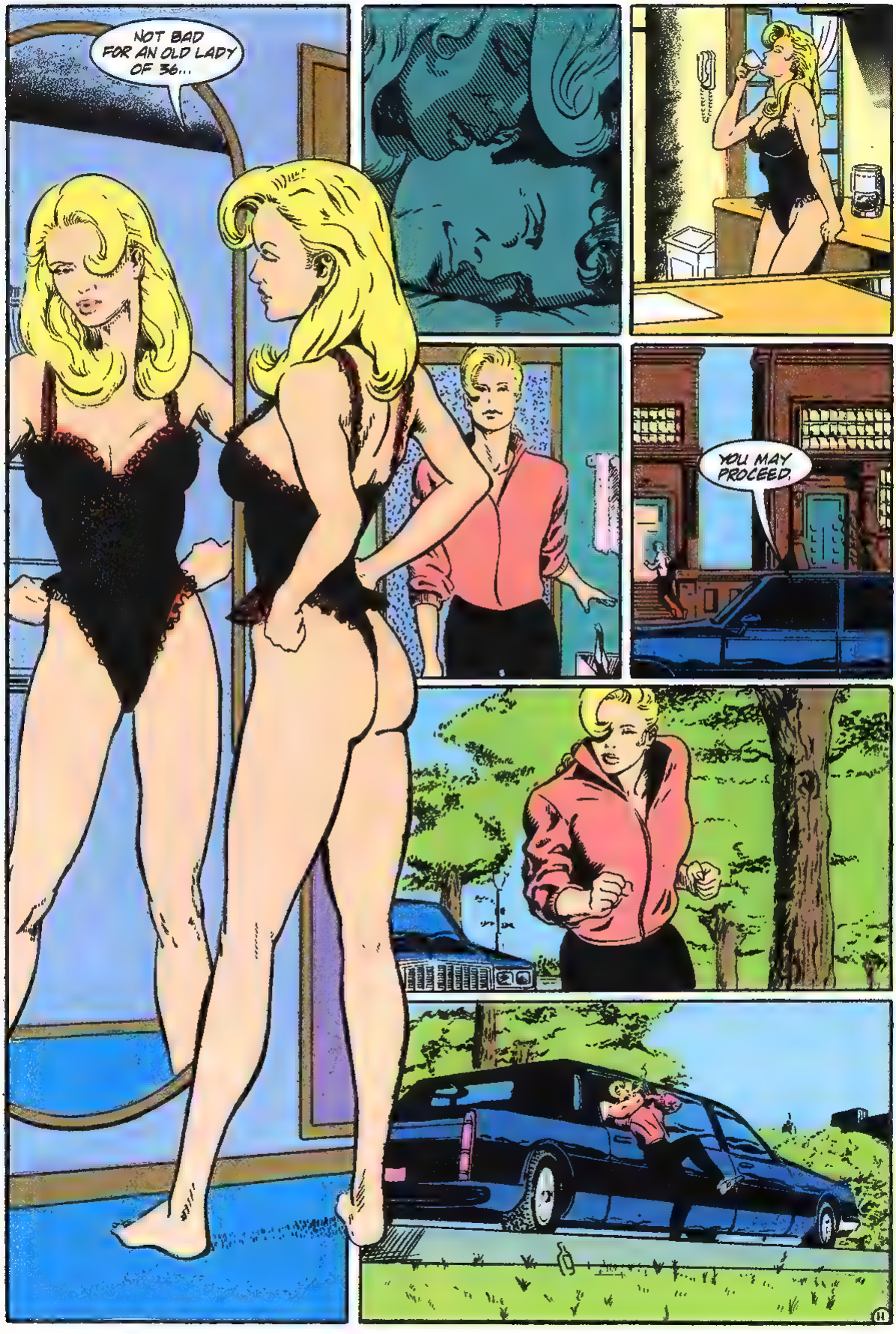

HIS WIFE DOESN'T LOVE HIM ANYMORE! AND WHAT MAKES IT ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS, ANYWAY?
IT'S NOT, AND I'M SURE THAT WHAT I'M SAYING WILL DO ABSOLUTELY NO GOOD. BUT I'M GOING TO SAY IT ANYWAY...

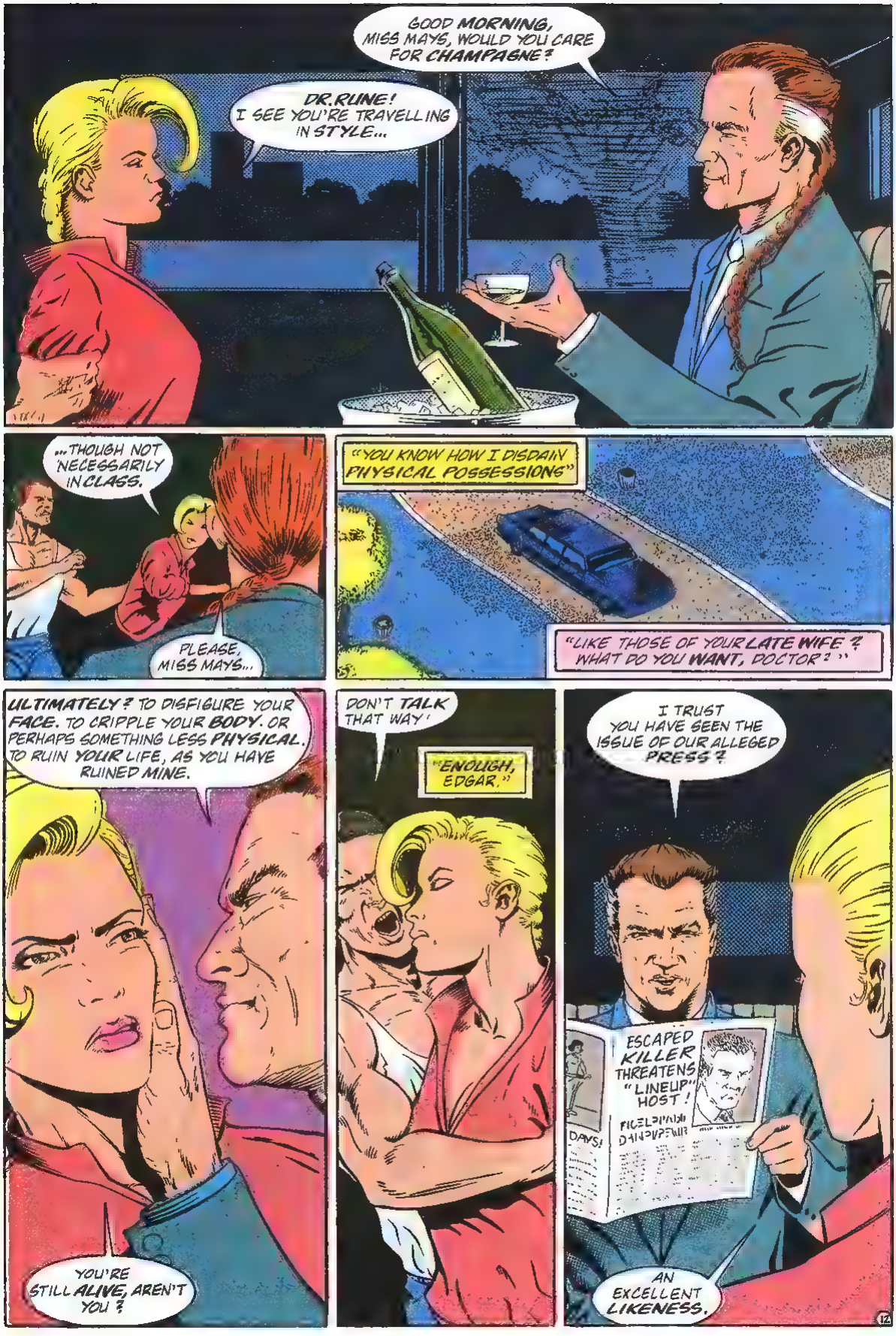

"...YOU THINK HE'LL LEAVE HIS WIFE FOR YOU? HE WON'T. YOU'LL MAKE PLANS AND HAVE THEM SPOILED. YOU'LL RARELY SEE HIM, AND WHEN YOU DO, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO GO ANYWHERE PUBLIC.
"YOU'RE GOING TO GET YOUR HEART BROKEN, LACEY...

I KNOW. I'VE BEEN THERE
YOU? JENNIFER, I NEVER THOUGHT...
I'M NOT JUDGING YOU, LACEY. I'M ONLY TELLING YOU HOW IT WAS FOR ME. IT WON'T BE ANY DIFFERENT FOR YOU.

IT WILL BE, JENNIFER. HE LOVES ME. WON'T YOU HELP HIM?
:SIGH: CALL ME ANYTIME YOU LIKE, DEAR. I'LL BE AVAILABLE.

I HOPE I WAS ABLE TO TALK SOME SENSE INTO HER.
SHE HAS TO MAKE HER OWN MISTAKES, JEN. WE ALL DO
I KNOW. I DON'T KNOW IF I WOULD HAVE LISTENED IF SOMEONE HAD TOLD ME, YEARS AGO, WHAT I WOULD HAVE GONE THROUGH WITH ARTHUR--
--BUT I WISH SOMEONE HAD TRIED.
JEN, THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU...
LATER
HSSSST


NOT BAD FOR AN OLD LADY OF 36...
YOU MAY PROCEED.


GOOD MORNING, MISS MAYS, WOULD YOU CARE FOR CHAMPAGNE?
DR. RUNE! I SEE YOU'RE TRAVELLING IN STYLE...
...THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY IN CLASS.
PLEASE, MISS MAYS...
"YOU KNOW HOW I DISDAIN PHYSICAL POSSESSIONS"
"LIKE THOSE OF YOUR LATE WIFE? WHAT DO YOU WANT, DOCTOR?"
ULTIMATELY? TO DISFIGURE YOUR FACE. TO CRIPPLE YOUR BODY. OR PERHAPS SOMETHING LESS PHYSICAL. TO RUIN YOUR LIFE, AS YOU HAVE RUINED MINE.
YOU'RE STILL ALIVE, AREN'T YOU?
DON'T TALK THAT WAY!
"ENOUGH, EDGAR."
I TRUST YOU HAVE SEEN THE ISSUE OF OUR ALLEGED PRESS?
ESCAPED KILLER THREATENS "LINEUP" HOST!
AN EXCELLENT LIKENESS.

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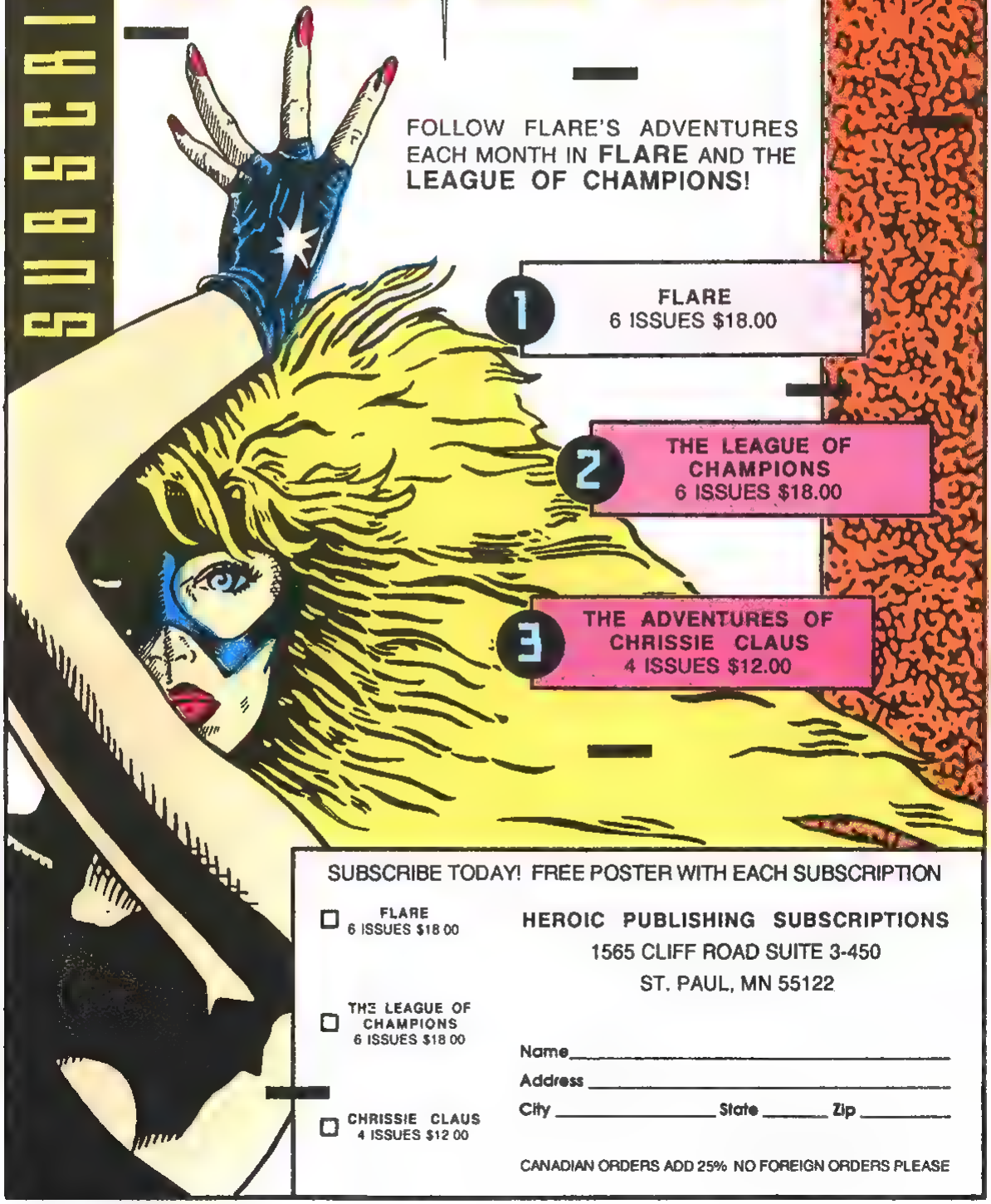

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**6433 California Ave.**
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*Include $1 with each order for postage and handling. Send check or money order only. Do not send cash.*

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First appearance, Flare and the Champions, Foxbat, Demon, Doctor Arcane.
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First appearance, Lady Arcane.
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The origin of Dark Malice.
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The origin of Flare.
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First appearance, Madame Synn, the Galloping Galooper. Icestar solo story.
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First appearance, the Fat Man, the Black Enchantress. Icestar solo stoy.
**Issue #3** . . . . . **$3.00**
First appearance, Sparkplug, Icicle. More about the origin of Flare.
**Issue #4** . . . . . **$2.00**
Foxbat appears. First appearance, Exo-Skeleton Man, Sylvia, Pulsar, Icicle in costume. Malice solo story.
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Battle issue, Foxbat and friends.
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First appearance, Mechanon. Foxbat cameo. Sparkplug appears in her own costume for the first time.
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Mechanon appears. Sparkplug, Icicle join the Champions.
**Issue #8** . . . . . **$3.00**
Origin of Foxbat, first encounters with Flare and Icestar.
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Sets stage for Flare's own title. Guest-stars Black Enchantress, plus Doctor & Lady Arcane, and Rose
**Issue #10** . . . . . **$2.00**
Begins Champions vs Malice and the gods of Olympus.
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Olympus story continues.
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Olympus story continues.
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Origins of Giant and Dark Malice, plus Malice solo story.

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Galloping Galooper returns. First appearance, Thugmaster, Blonde Bombshell, the Dash. First Lady Arcane solo story. Burgard and Beachum artwork.
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Origin of the Marksman continues. Rose, Icestar guest-star. Rose solo story.
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Origin of the Marksman concludes. Rose, Icestar guest-star. First appearance of Brother Basilisk in Rose solo story.
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Flare guest-stars in Rose solo. First appearance Ogre, Doctor Destroyer.
**Issue #5** . . . . . **$3.00**
Rose cover-featured. First appearance, Radar, Sonar, Professor Muerte, Green Dragon.
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Champions guest-star vs. Doctor Destroyer and the Enemies.

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**Issue #5** . . . . . **$2.00**
**Issue #6** . . . . . **$2.00**
**Issue #7** . . . . . **$2.00**
**Issue #8** . . . . . **$3.00**
Sparkplug, King's Gambit appear.
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Sparkplug, King's Gambit appear.
**Issue #10** . . . . . **$3.00**
Sparkplug, King's Gambit appear

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All issues by Dennis Mallonee, Rick Hoberg, and Tim Burgard.

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First appearance, Eternity Smith, Skylark Smith, and the Crew.
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**Issue #4** . . . . . **$2.00**
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We've uncovered a very small stock of the hard-to-find final issue of the Eternity Smith mini-series. Once these are gone, that's it.
**LIBRARY EDITION** . . . . . **$59.95**
The five mini-series issues, plus the first Hero Comics issue collected in a signed and numbered limited edition bound in brown Spanish fabric.

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Concludes first Eternity Smith story.
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Knightshade solo, Burgard art.
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**Issue #6** . . . . . **$2.00**
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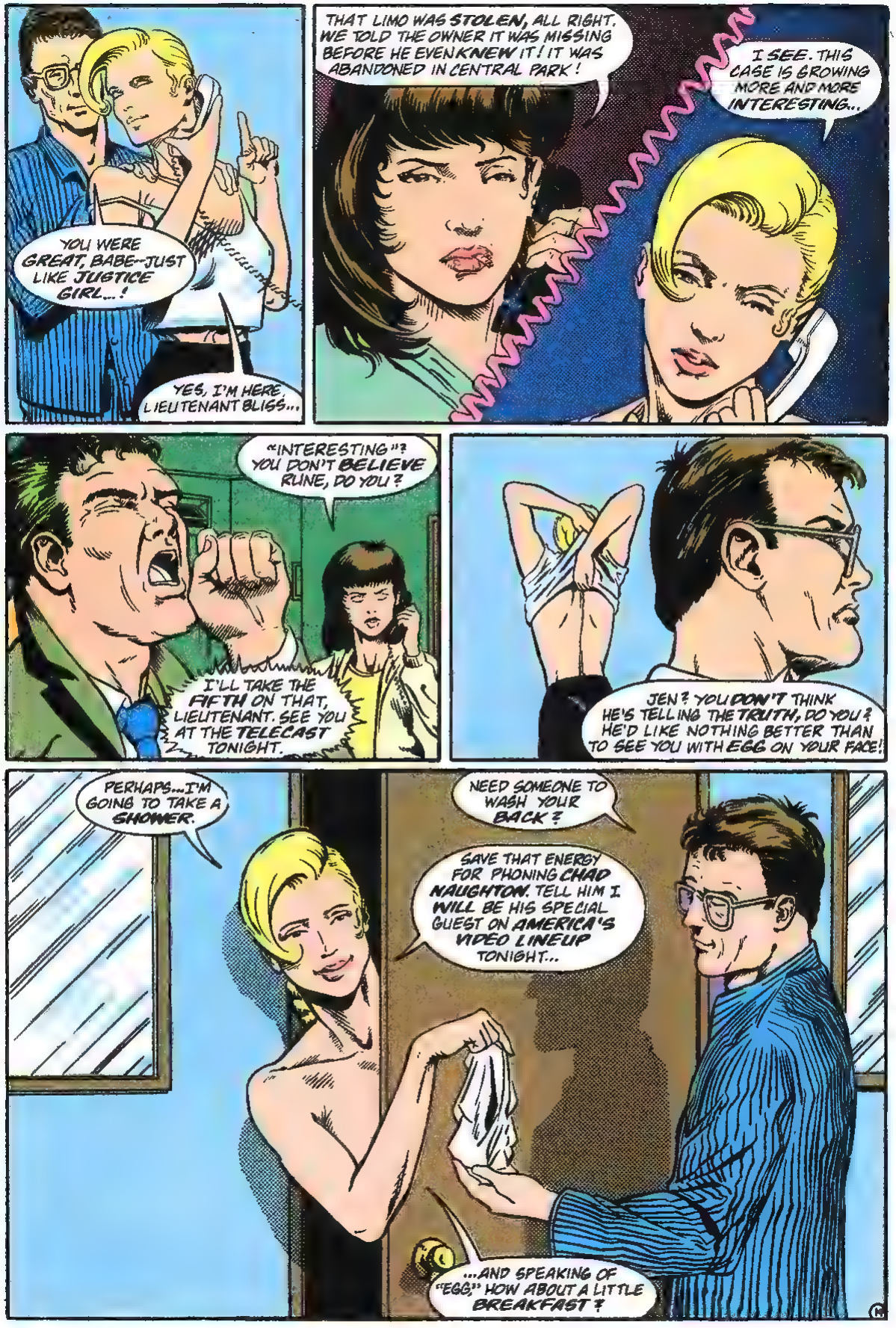
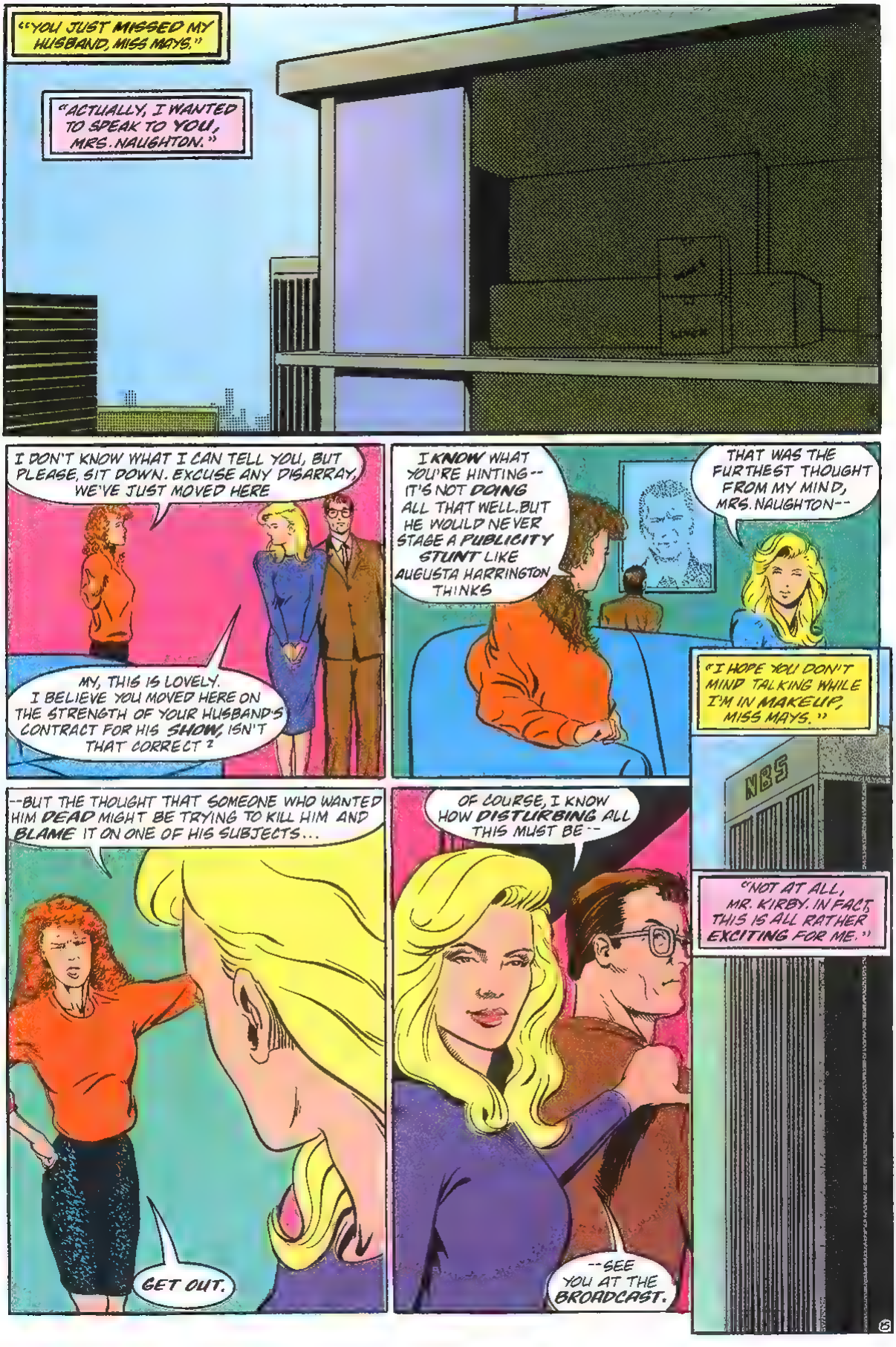
**Issue #8** . . . . . **$2.00**
First appearance, Indigo.
**Issue #9** . . . . . **$3.00**
Indigo appears. Guest appearance, Star Trek's Walter Koenig.

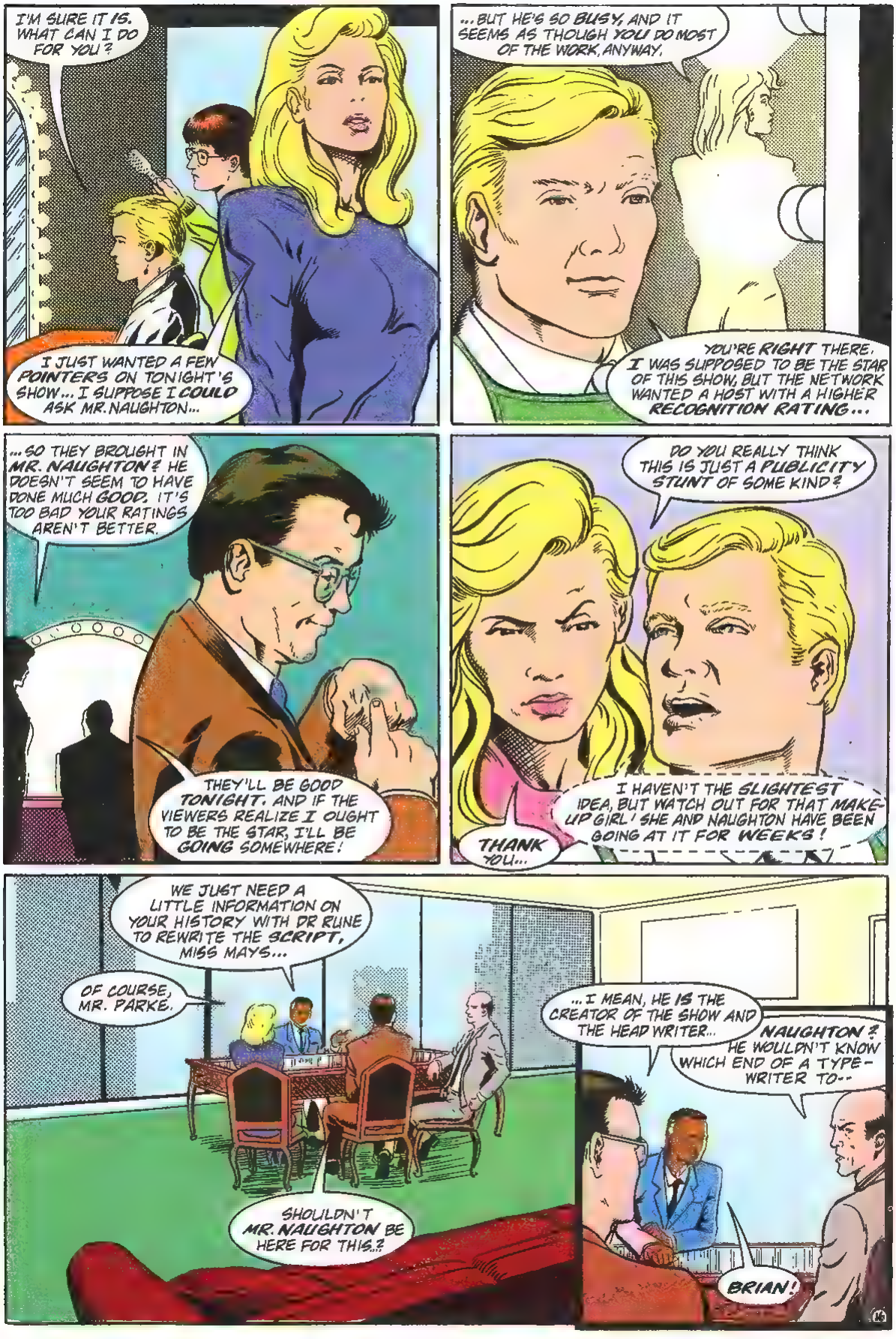
## • FANTASY BOOK •

Between 1981 and 1987, Heroic Publishing's predecessor company published 23 issues of the fiction magazine, Fantasy Book. Each of those issues is still available at $4.00 each.

NO MORE BADINAGE, MISS MAYS. I TELL YOU THAT I HAVE NOT THREATENED THE LIFE OF THIS-- THIS NAUGHTON PERSON I HAVE NO INTEREST IN HIS TELECAST.
YOU'RE TELLING ME YOU'RE BEING FRAMED, DOCTOR?
I AM. YOU WILL CONVEY THIS TO THAT DISAGREEABLE LIEUTENANT BLISS.
I'LL BE HAPPY TO
AAAKKK!
SCREEEE
AGGGGH!
13


YOU WERE GREAT, BABE--JUST LIKE JUSTICE GIRL...!
YES, I'M HERE, LIEUTENANT BLISS...
THAT LIMO WAS STOLEN, ALL RIGHT. WE TOLD THE OWNER IT WAS MISSING BEFORE HE EVEN KNEW IT! IT WAS ABANDONED IN CENTRAL PARK!
I SEE. THIS CASE IS GROWING MORE AND MORE INTERESTING...
"INTERESTING"? YOU DON'T BELIEVE RUNE, DO YOU?
I'LL TAKE THE FIFTH ON THAT, LIEUTENANT. SEE YOU AT THE TELECAST TONIGHT.
JEN? YOU DON'T THINK HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH, DO YOU? HE'D LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN TO SEE YOU WITH EGG ON YOUR FACE!
PERHAPS...I'M GOING TO TAKE A SHOWER.
NEED SOMEONE TO WASH YOUR BACK?
SAVE THAT ENERGY FOR PHONING CHAD NAUGHTON. TELL HIM I WILL BE HIS SPECIAL GUEST ON AMERICA'S VIDEO LINEUP TONIGHT...
...AND SPEAKING OF "EGG," HOW ABOUT A LITTLE BREAKFAST?


"YOU JUST MISSED MY HUSBAND, MISS MAYS."
"ACTUALLY, I WANTED TO SPEAK TO YOU, MRS. NAUGHTON."
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I CAN TELL YOU, BUT PLEASE, SIT DOWN. EXCUSE ANY DISARRAY, WE'VE JUST MOVED HERE
MY, THIS IS LOVELY. I BELIEVE YOU MOVED HERE ON THE STRENGTH OF YOUR HUSBAND'S CONTRACT FOR HIS SHOW, ISN'T THAT CORRECT?
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE HINTING -- IT'S NOT DOING ALL THAT WELL. BUT HE WOULD NEVER STAGE A PUBLICITY STUNT LIKE AUGUSTA HARRINGTON THINKS
THAT WAS THE FURTHEST THOUGHT FROM MY MIND, MRS. NAUGHTON--
"I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND TALKING WHILE I'M IN MAKEUP, MISS MAYS."
NBS
--BUT THE THOUGHT THAT SOMEONE WHO WANTED HIM DEAD MIGHT BE TRYING TO KILL HIM AND BLAME IT ON ONE OF HIS SUBJECTS...
GET OUT.
OF COURSE, I KNOW HOW DISTURBING ALL THIS MUST BE--
--SEE YOU AT THE BROADCAST.
"NOT AT ALL, MR. KIRBY. IN FACT, THIS IS ALL RATHER EXCITING FOR ME."


I'M SURE IT IS. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
I JUST WANTED A FEW POINTERS ON TONIGHT'S SHOW... I SUPPOSE I COULD ASK MR. NAUGHTON...
...BUT HE'S SO BUSY, AND IT SEEMS AS THOUGH YOU DO MOST OF THE WORK, ANYWAY.
YOU'RE RIGHT THERE. I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE STAR OF THIS SHOW, BUT THE NETWORK WANTED A HOST WITH A HIGHER RECOGNITION RATING...
...SO THEY BROUGHT IN MR. NAUGHTON? HE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE DONE MUCH GOOD. IT'S TOO BAD YOUR RATINGS AREN'T BETTER.
THEY'LL BE GOOD TONIGHT. AND IF THE VIEWERS REALIZE I OUGHT TO BE THE STAR, I'LL BE GOING SOMEWHERE!
DO YOU REALLY THINK THIS IS JUST A PUBLICITY STUNT OF SOME KIND?
I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST IDEA, BUT WATCH OUT FOR THAT MAKE-UP GIRL! SHE AND NAUGHTON HAVE BEEN GOING AT IT FOR WEEKS!
THANK YOU...
WE JUST NEED A LITTLE INFORMATION ON YOUR HISTORY WITH DR RUNE TO REWRITE THE SCRIPT, MISS MAYS...
OF COURSE, MR. PARKE.
SHOULDN'T MR. NAUGHTON BE HERE FOR THIS...?
...I MEAN, HE IS THE CREATOR OF THE SHOW AND THE HEAD WRITER...
NAUGHTON? HE WOULDN'T KNOW WHICH END OF A TYPE-WRITER TO--
BRIAN!

from the desk of Jennifer Mays

# the MAZE AGENTS

3622 Jacob Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

# INTO THE MAZE

*I hope all **MAZE** Agents caught either the May 14th or August 27th broadcasts of* Jeopardy! *If not, well, you missed the $500 question in the category of "Comic Books": "Fictional sleuth with his own mystery magazine, he recently guest-sleuthed with **THE MAZE AGENCY**."*

*The correct answer -- actually, question -- was "Who is Ellery Queen?" as supplied by college student **Amy Zucker**, and as written by* Jeopardy! *staffer and comics fan **Steven Dorfman**. Thanks, Steve -- but Gabe wants to know when he gets his own star in the Hollywood Walk of Fame.*

*--MWB*

Dear Mike,

Every month, I read the "letters" section of the comic and you are always requesting for more letter from readers. I would never forgive myself if (God forbid) ***THE MAZE AGENCY*** were to be cancelled and I never gave you my input. In a nutshell, I love ***MAZE***. It has all the makings of a fine mystery series. Gabe Webb and Jennifer Mays are likeable, intelligent, humorous and, most of all, *believable* characters. The two personalities work very well together, and I am glad to see how their relationship has been developing over time. What I like most about Gabe Webb is his down-to-Earth personality. He's not your typical comic book hero -- strong, macho, and incredibly fake. Gabe is just a regular guy, making him more appealing to the reader. Jennifer Mays is smart, beautiful, and very driven. Yet she is also not your typical comic book heroine; her life is less than perfect (her family problems and her recovery from a bad relationship), making her more easy to relate to. In sum, ***THE MAZE AGENCY*** really entertains.

After reading issue #12, I have some specific and general questions:

1.) In issue #12, on the back, it said that this issue is extra-long. This issue was also priced at $2.50, which is justifiable if it were longer but after reading it I realized it had the same 24 pages that every issue has. How was it extra long? Why $2.50? (Trying to milk the readers?)

2.) How well is ***THE MAZE AGENCY*** selling? Is it on the verge of cancellation, like at Comico? (Please say "No.")

3.) Is Adam Hughes going to come back soon to guest-pencil on an issue? (He's the best penciller on the comic market today -- at least that's what I think.) Is he getting the recognition he deserves?

Well, I think this letter is long enough. Keep up the good work!!

G.W.
New York, NY

P.S.: I'm a 22 year-old, female accountant -- anyone who says comic books are for kids is missing out!

*In answer to your questions, G.W. (Gabe says, "cool initials!):*

*1.) Actually, issue #12 contained 26 pages, not the usual 24. Innovation likes charging extra money about as much as readers like paying it, but it was a necessary in this instance, as those extra full-color pages cost extra money to produce. (Gabe asks: "Are you sure you're an accountant?")*

*2.) No. (Hey, that was easy! Not to mention pleasurable!) **MAZE**, though not in any danger of outselling anything beginning with an "X," is doing okay. Loan your friends copies of **MAZE**, tell them to buy their own. (The first one is always free!)*

*3.) Adam Hughes, talented fellow that he is, is quite busy with other publishers and won't be drawing any interior pages of **MAZE** for awhile. (Which should answer your question about his getting the recognition he deserves.) However, Adam did contribute the nifty cover to our very next issue! Ask for it by name!*

*- MWB*

Jennifer --

Re: ***THE MAZE AGENCY #13*** ("The Adventure of the Bleeding Venus") cover. "C.K. was here"? C.K.=Clark Kent! Observant, aren't I?

Other observations for all involved.

* Great stories -- even my wife, Kathy reads them (a *very* big compliment!!)

* How about a "locked roon" mystery again?

* Any chance of team-ups with other famous detectives? (Sherlock Holmes, Charlie Chan, Sam Spade....)

* One last comment: More complexity to your mysteries. Too few suspects, too easy clues.

Steven Pearlman
19 Brentwood Drive
Verona, NJ 07044

***MAZE** seems to have a greater-than-average female readership, which tickles everyone involved just pink. Is it the presence of Jennifer Mays, a capable, intelligent career woman, or the romantic angle, or both? (An anonymous*

*source says: "It's the presence of that handsome hunk and deductive heartthrob, Gabe Webb." Maybe.)*

*You want locked rooms? You had one last issue, and you'll have more in issues* **#19** *and* **#20**. *See if these stories are too easy to solve!*

*As to team-ups with other famous detectives, the jury is still out. Comments, anyone...?*

*--MWB*

Dear Mike --

As for *Justice Girl's* -- uh -- Jen's (and Gabe's) solution to the Venus killer, I'd have to make a teensy complaint, namely that the motive (debt) wasn't given until after the solution was proferred. I spotted Stallman as the killer as we'd seen a left hand holding the wrench -- and he and Donnie, who was too obvious, were the only non-right-handed men around. Actually, Donnie could have been the killer, too, but in the end the cane switch tipped the balance. Like I said, though, I couldn't work out why he'd commit the crime. You always introduce the possible suspects very neatly, but still have a tendency to not offer enough depth on many of then, again making me wonder whether some two-parters might be in order.

The interplay between Gabe and Ashley was fun. At least Jen's anger was short-lived; she should know her lover better than to think he'd really have forsaken her, and I'm sure Gabe was telling the truth about his plan to flush out Jen, even if he enjoyed the means to his end.

The cover was stunning. The interior looked a little different from Robb and less Rick, I'd say.

So: It's dismemberings this issue, death row the next. Are we having fun yet?!

Malcolm Bourne
2 & 4 Bye Road
Shuttleworth, Ramsbottom
Bury, Lancashire BL0 0HH
England

*As Lieutenant Bliss said in issue* **#4**, *"The brain is always a very tricky area." One man's motive for murder may be blatantly obvious, while another's may lie 30 years in the past, a trivial incident blown way out of proportion by the offended party, and totally forgotten -- indeed, unintended -- by the offender. You won't always be able to tell who the killer is in* **MAZE** *by the apparent motives, go for logical deductions from the clues provided, and trust motive to come out in the wash.*

*As mentioned in the lettercol to* **#14**, *issue* **#13** *was inked by* **LEGENDS OF THE STARGRAZERS***'s own* **Randy Elliot**, *not Rick Magyar, who was inadvertently credited with the inking. Although Randy was properly credited in the editorial. Hmm, maybe Randy will nurse a grudge against Rick for 30 years, and then...Nahhh!*

*--MWB*

Dear David,

First off, let me just say that *MAZE AGENCY* **#13** was the absolute best issue of the series since you picked it up from Comico.

Then again, the best issue. Period.

Am I crazy or is Jen legitimately jealous of Ashley fawning over Gabe? Speaking of Ashley, I assume she too read "Justice Girl" when she was a kid, or this little charade was meant to create *jealousy?!* By the by, I thought originally Jen was going to bring *Justice Girl* to life to solve the case, but then I should consider reading between the lines, right?

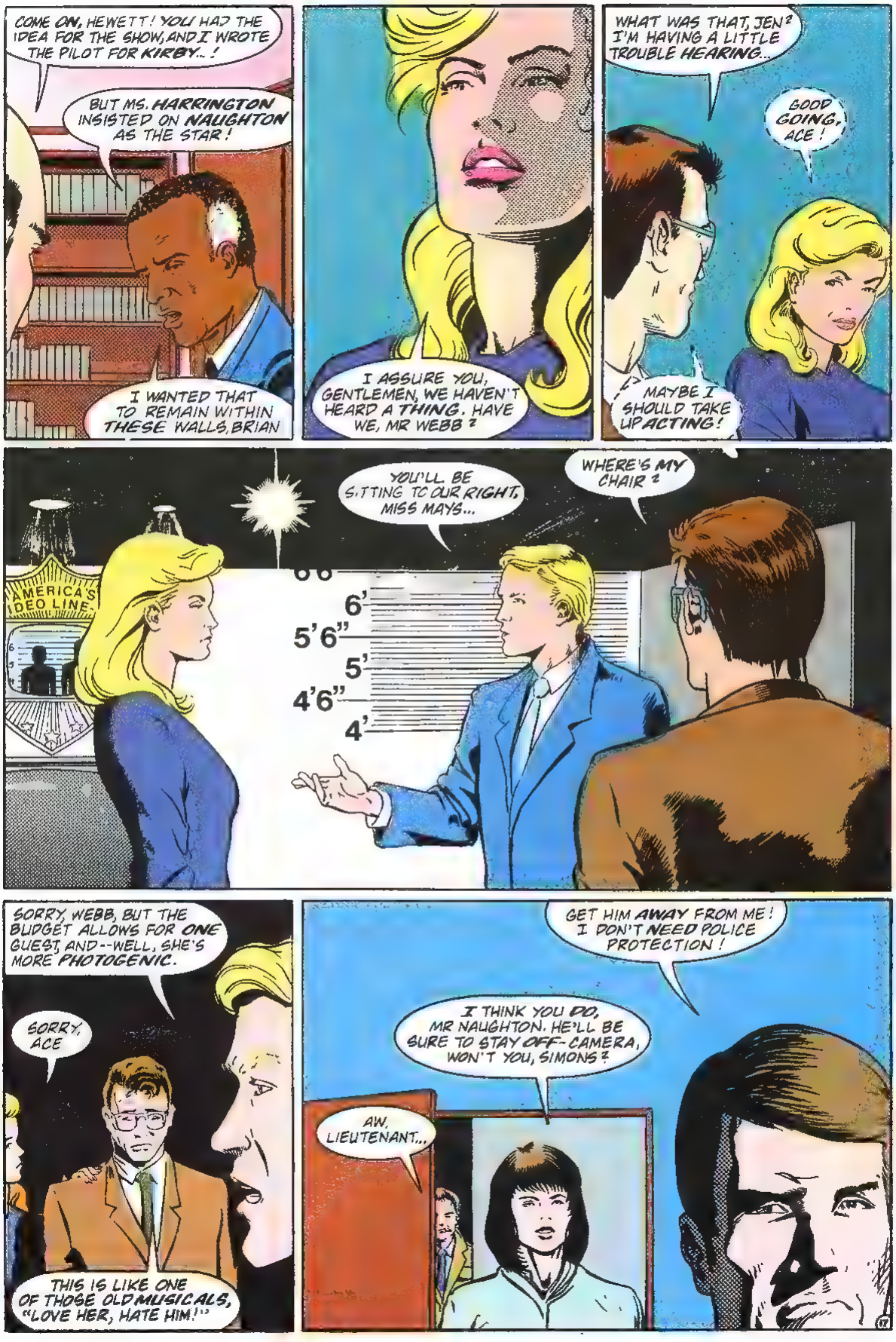
Jacob Gilbert
118 4th St. Apt. #1
Troy, NY 12180

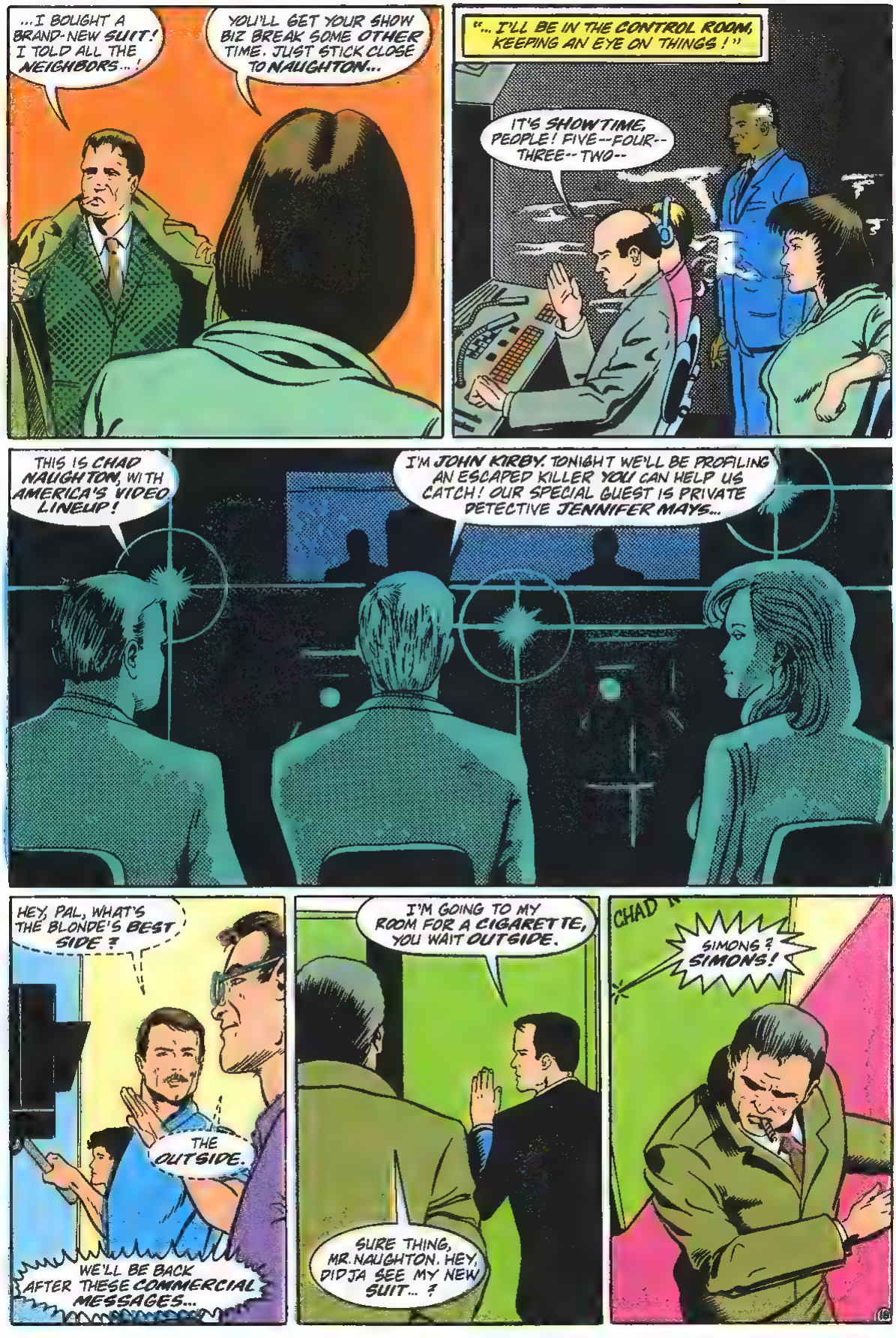
*Right! (Hey, that was even easier!)*

*-- MWB*

***NEXT ISSUE:*** *It's the annual Christmas meeting of The Mystery League, a club whose membership consists of the world's greatest detectives. But last year, their holiday cheer was spoiled by the murder of one of their members, and this year, another member says he knows whodunit! Before "The Adventure of the Mystery League" is over, there'll be a corpse in a locked room and more work for* **THE MAZE AGENCY!** *Featuring the return of* **Ashley Swift!** *Art by* **Rob Davis!** *With a special holiday cover by* **Adam Hughes,** *and story by*

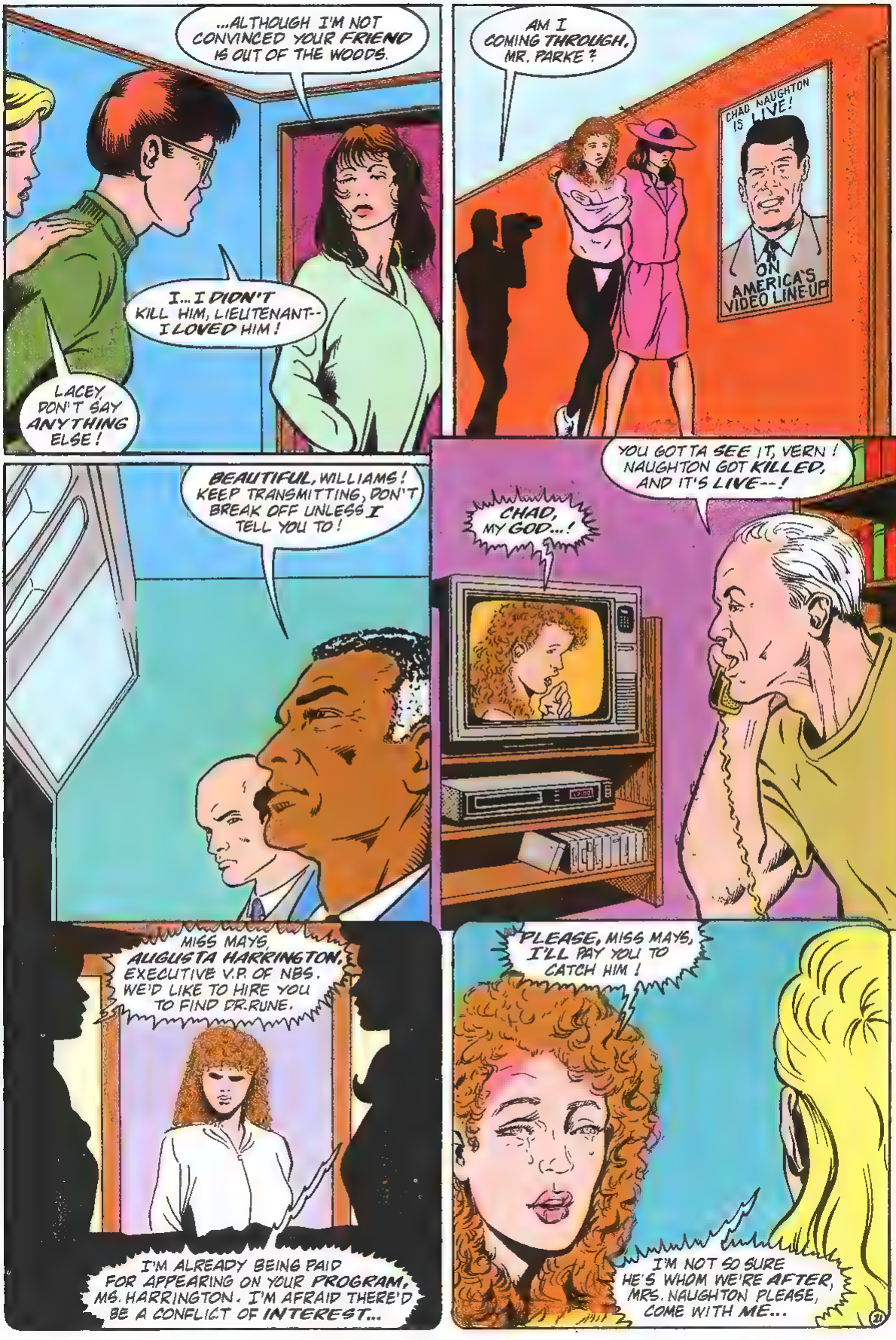
***--Mike W. Barr***


COME ON, HEWETT! YOU HAD THE IDEA FOR THE SHOW, AND I WROTE THE PILOT FOR KIRBY...!
BUT MS. HARRINGTON INSISTED ON NAUGHTON AS THE STAR!
I WANTED THAT TO REMAIN WITHIN THESE WALLS, BRIAN
I ASSURE YOU, GENTLEMEN, WE HAVEN'T HEARD A THING. HAVE WE, MR WEBB?
WHAT WAS THAT, JEN? I'M HAVING A LITTLE TROUBLE HEARING..
GOOD GOING, ACE!
MAYBE I SHOULD TAKE UP ACTING!
YOU'LL BE SITTING TO OUR RIGHT, MISS MAYS...
WHERE'S MY CHAIR?
AMERICA'S VIDEO LINE
6'
5'6"
5'
4'6"
4'
SORRY, WEBB, BUT THE BUDGET ALLOWS FOR ONE GUEST, AND--WELL, SHE'S MORE PHOTOGENIC.
SORRY, ACE
THIS IS LIKE ONE OF THOSE OLD MUSICALS, "LOVE HER, HATE HIM!"
GET HIM AWAY FROM ME! I DON'T NEED POLICE PROTECTION!
I THINK YOU DO, MR NAUGHTON. HE'LL BE SURE TO STAY OFF-CAMERA, WON'T YOU, SIMONS?
AW, LIEUTENANT...


...I BOUGHT A BRAND-NEW SUIT! I TOLD ALL THE NEIGHBORS...!
YOU'LL GET YOUR SHOW BIZ BREAK SOME OTHER TIME. JUST STICK CLOSE TO NAUGHTON...
"... I'LL BE IN THE CONTROL ROOM, KEEPING AN EYE ON THINGS!"
IT'S SHOWTIME, PEOPLE! FIVE--FOUR--THREE--TWO--
THIS IS CHAD NAUGHTON, WITH AMERICA'S VIDEO LINEUP!
I'M JOHN KIRBY. TONIGHT WE'LL BE PROFILING AN ESCAPED KILLER YOU CAN HELP US CATCH! OUR SPECIAL GUEST IS PRIVATE DETECTIVE JENNIFER MAYS...
HEY, PAL, WHAT'S THE BLONDE'S BEST SIDE?
THE OUTSIDE.
WE'LL BE BACK AFTER THESE COMMERCIAL MESSAGES...
I'M GOING TO MY ROOM FOR A CIGARETTE, YOU WAIT OUTSIDE.
SURE THING, MR. NAUGHTON. HEY, DIDJA SEE MY NEW SUIT...?
CHAD
SIMONS? SIMONS!

RIGHT HERE, MR--
THUDD
UNHHHHH-
MR. NAUGHTON, THIRTY SECONDS TO AIR...
CHAD...?
SHRIEEEEEEEEEK
NOW WHAT?
HOLY JUMPIN' GOD..!

I'VE ALREADY ALERTED STANDBY, THEY'LL GO TO ALTERNATE PROGRAMMING AT YOUR SIGNAL...
WE'LL CONTINUE CARRYING AVL, LIVE.
PARKE, THAT'S IN THE WORST POSSIBLE TASTE!
OBVIOUSLY, YOU'VE NEVER SEEN "GERALDO!"
I DUNNO WHAT HAPPENED, LOOT! NAUGHTON CALLED OUT, SOUNDED AFRAID, I STARTED IN, AND GOT CLUBBED FROM BEHIND. NEXT THING I KNEW, I WOKE UP IN THE CLOSET.
MAN, LOOK AT MY SUIT...!
HE WAS KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS FIRST, PROBABLY BY THE SAME WEAPON USED ON SIMONS... I WONDER IF HE SHOUTED DUE TO A CALL HE HAD RECEIVED...
HMM... YOU KNOW, IF I WANTED TO STRANGLE A GUY, I'D USE MY HANDS... THE WINDPIPE IS AWFULLY HARD TO BREAK WITH A CORD...
THIS IS DR. RUNE, NAUGHTON... YOU WILL DIE.
I'VE GOT THE BUILDING SEALED, RUNE CAN'T GET AWAY.
IF IT REALLY WAS DR. RUNE, LIEUTENANT.
YEAH, I HAD SOME SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THAT MYSELF -- NOBODY CAN ALIBI ANYONE ELSE -- BUT THAT RECORDING SEEMS TO CLINCH IT...


...ALTHOUGH I'M NOT CONVINCED YOUR FRIEND IS OUT OF THE WOODS.
I... I DIDN'T KILL HIM, LIEUTENANT-- I LOVED HIM!
LACEY, DON'T SAY ANYTHING ELSE!
AM I COMING THROUGH, MR. PARKE?
CHAD NAUGHTON IS LIVE! ON AMERICA'S VIDEO LINE-UP
BEAUTIFUL, WILLIAMS! KEEP TRANSMITTING, DON'T BREAK OFF UNLESS I TELL YOU TO!
CHAD, MY GOD...!
YOU GOTTA SEE IT, VERN! NAUGHTON GOT KILLED, AND IT'S LIVE--!
MISS MAYS, AUGUSTA HARRINGTON, EXECUTIVE V.P. OF NBS. WE'D LIKE TO HIRE YOU TO FIND DR. RUNE.
I'M ALREADY BEING PAID FOR APPEARING ON YOUR PROGRAM, MS. HARRINGTON. I'M AFRAID THERE'D BE A CONFLICT OF INTEREST...
PLEASE, MISS MAYS, I'LL PAY YOU TO CATCH HIM!
I'M NOT SO SURE HE'S WHOM WE'RE AFTER, MRS. NAUGHTON PLEASE, COME WITH ME...
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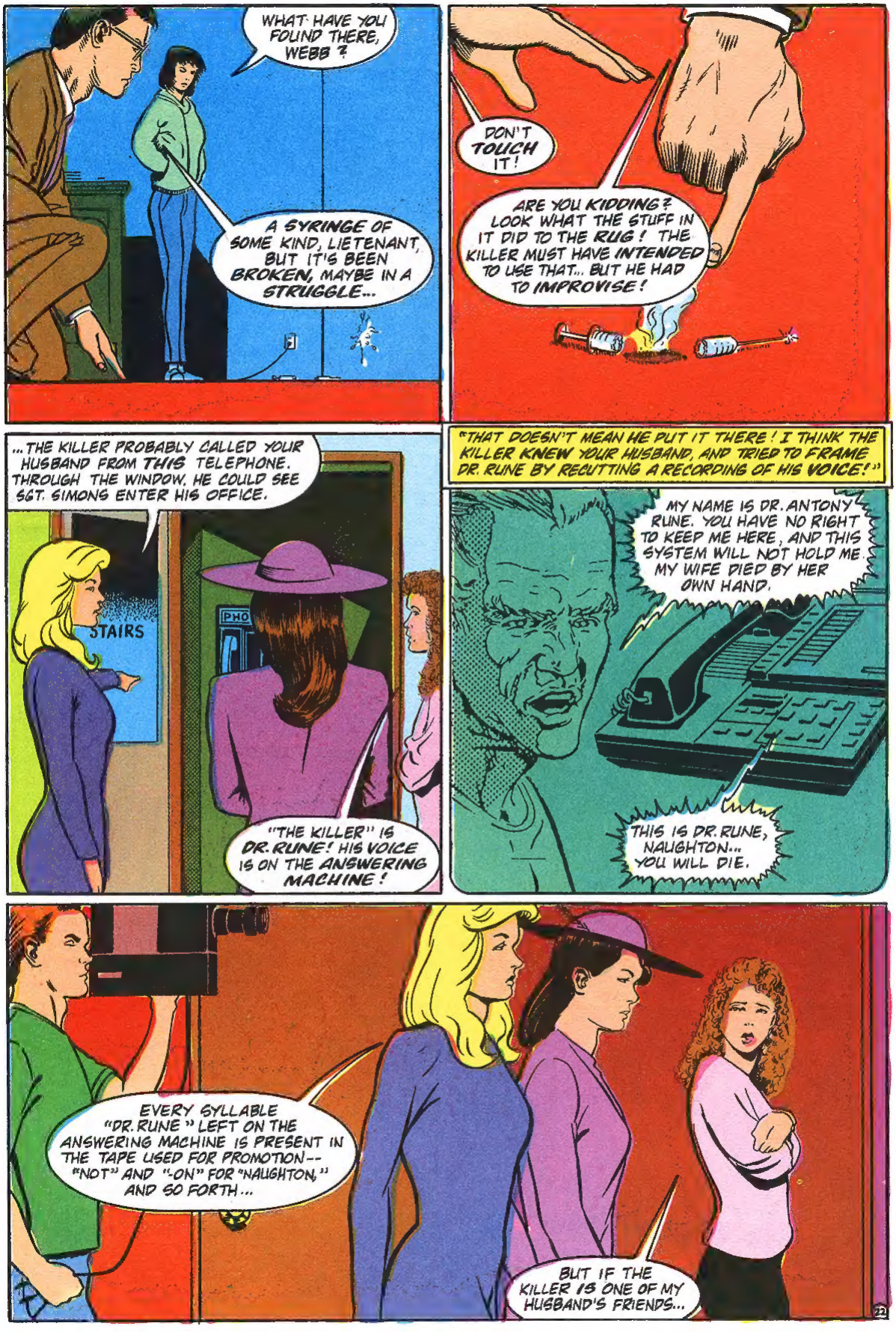
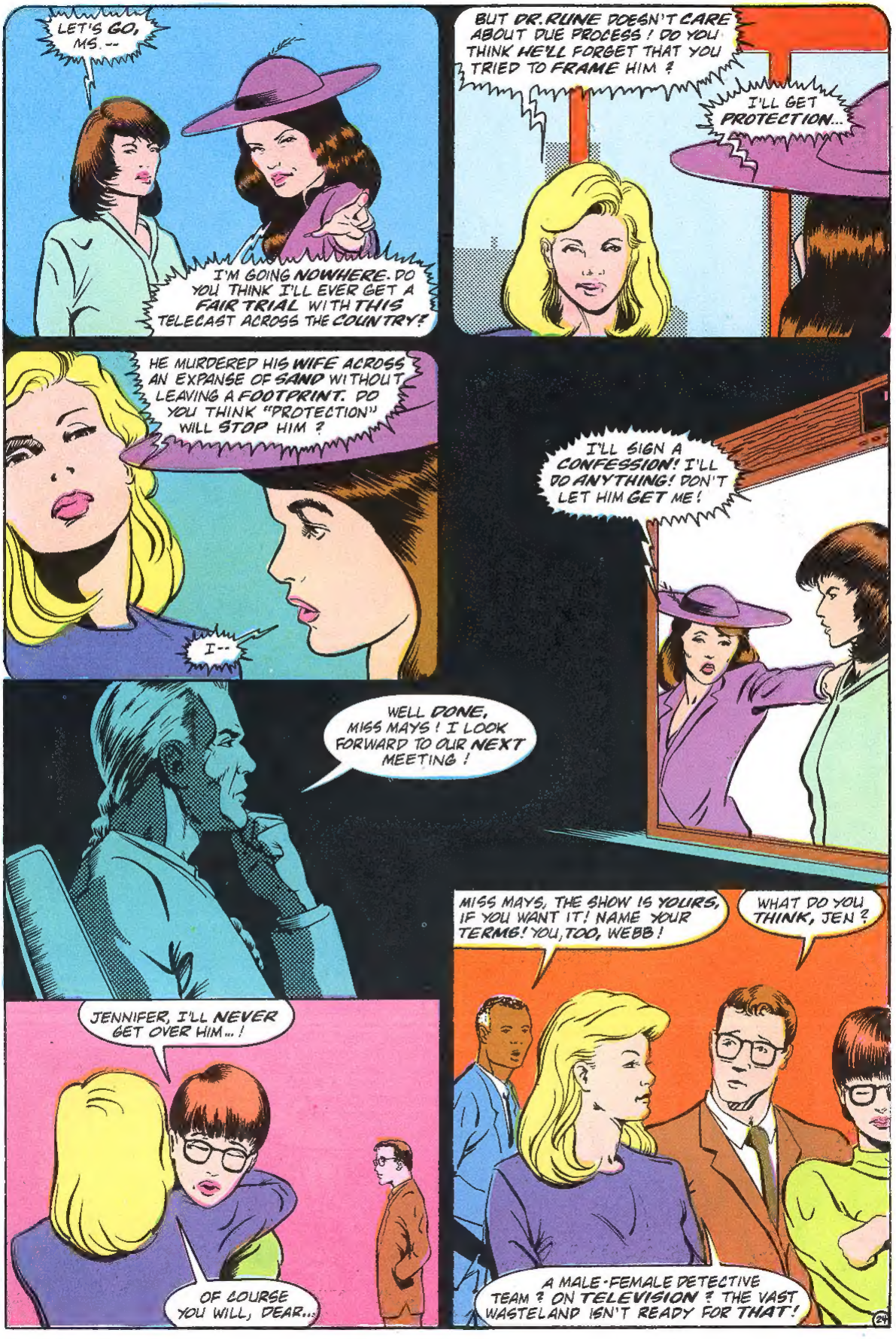

WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND THERE, WEBB ?
A SYRINGE OF SOME KIND, LIETENANT, BUT IT'S BEEN BROKEN, MAYBE IN A STRUGGLE...
DON'T TOUCH IT!
ARE YOU KIDDING? LOOK WHAT THE STUFF IN IT DID TO THE RUG! THE KILLER MUST HAVE INTENDED TO USE THAT... BUT HE HAD TO IMPROVISE!
...THE KILLER PROBABLY CALLED YOUR HUSBAND FROM THIS TELEPHONE. THROUGH THE WINDOW, HE COULD SEE SGT. SIMONS ENTER HIS OFFICE.
STAIRS
PHO
"THE KILLER" IS DR. RUNE! HIS VOICE IS ON THE ANSWERING MACHINE!
"THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE PUT IT THERE! I THINK THE KILLER KNEW YOUR HUSBAND, AND TRIED TO FRAME DR. RUNE BY RECUTTING A RECORDING OF HIS VOICE!"
MY NAME IS DR. ANTONY RUNE. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO KEEP ME HERE, AND THIS SYSTEM WILL NOT HOLD ME. MY WIFE DIED BY HER OWN HAND.
THIS IS DR. RUNE, NAUGHTON... YOU WILL DIE.
EVERY SYLLABLE "DR. RUNE" LEFT ON THE ANSWERING MACHINE IS PRESENT IN THE TAPE USED FOR PROMOTION-- "NOT" AND "-ON" FOR "NAUGHTON," AND SO FORTH...
BUT IF THE KILLER IS ONE OF MY HUSBAND'S FRIENDS...

THE KILLER KNEW YOUR HUSBAND, MRS. NAUGHTON-- BUT I DON'T KNOW THAT THEY WERE "FRIENDS."
WHAT DO YOU CALL THAT, THE "DEATH-CAM?" WELL, KEEP IT RUNNING.
THE KILLER EXPOSED HIS IDENTITY WHEN HIS INITIAL PLAN FELL THROUGH, WHICH WAS TO POISON MR. NAUGHTON! BUT THEY PROBABLY STRUGGLED...
... THEN THE KILLER CLUBBED HIM. THE SYRINGE GOT BROKEN, SO THE KILLER STRANGLED HIM INSTEAD, TAKING THE TIME TO USE THIS MICROPHONE CORD!
THAT'S INTERESTING! IT'S DIFFICULT TO BE SURE IF A GUY IS DEAD, USING A THICK CORD LIKE THIS...
...IT'S MUCH SIMPLER TO BE CERTAIN THE GUY'S WINDPIPE IS BROKEN IF YOU USE YOUR OWN HANDS. DESTROYING THE MAKEUP BIB NAUGHTON WORE WOULD REMOVE ANY TRACES LEFT BY THE KILLER...
...EXCEPT FOR YOUR FINGERNAILS, MS. HARRINGTON! THEY WOULD HAVE MARKED HIS SKIN, EVEN THROUGH THE BIB! WE HAD A CASE A FEW WEEKS AGO WHERE SHORT FINGERNAILS TRIPPED UP A KILLER, BUT YOURS--
DAMN HIM! HE TOLD ME HE LOVED ME! I GOT HIM THIS JOB, AND HE FORGOT ME!


LET'S GO, MS. --
I'M GOING NOWHERE. DO YOU THINK I'LL EVER GET A FAIR TRIAL WITH THIS TELECAST ACROSS THE COUNTRY?
BUT DR. RUNE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT DUE PROCESS! DO YOU THINK HE'LL FORGET THAT YOU TRIED TO FRAME HIM?
I'LL GET PROTECTION...
HE MURDERED HIS WIFE ACROSS AN EXPANSE OF SAND WITHOUT LEAVING A FOOTPRINT. DO YOU THINK "PROTECTION" WILL STOP HIM?
I--
I'LL SIGN A CONFESSION! I'LL DO ANYTHING! DON'T LET HIM GET ME!
WELL DONE, MISS MAYS! I LOOK FORWARD TO OUR NEXT MEETING!
JENNIFER, I'LL NEVER GET OVER HIM...!
OF COURSE YOU WILL, DEAR...
MISS MAYS, THE SHOW IS YOURS, IF YOU WANT IT! NAME YOUR TERMS! YOU, TOO, WEBB!
WHAT DO YOU THINK, JEN?
A MALE-FEMALE DETECTIVE TEAM? ON TELEVISION? THE VAST WASTELAND ISN'T READY FOR THAT!
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INNOVATION™

# A Cacophony Of Christmas Cheer!

*ACK THE BARBARIAN #1* -- An all-new Innovation B&W. Computer-generated silly barbarian strangeness -- written and illustrated by **Mario D. Macari**. Cover by **Mario Macari**!

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*Next Issue:*

"The Adventure Of The Mystery League"

*Cover by Adam Hughes!*